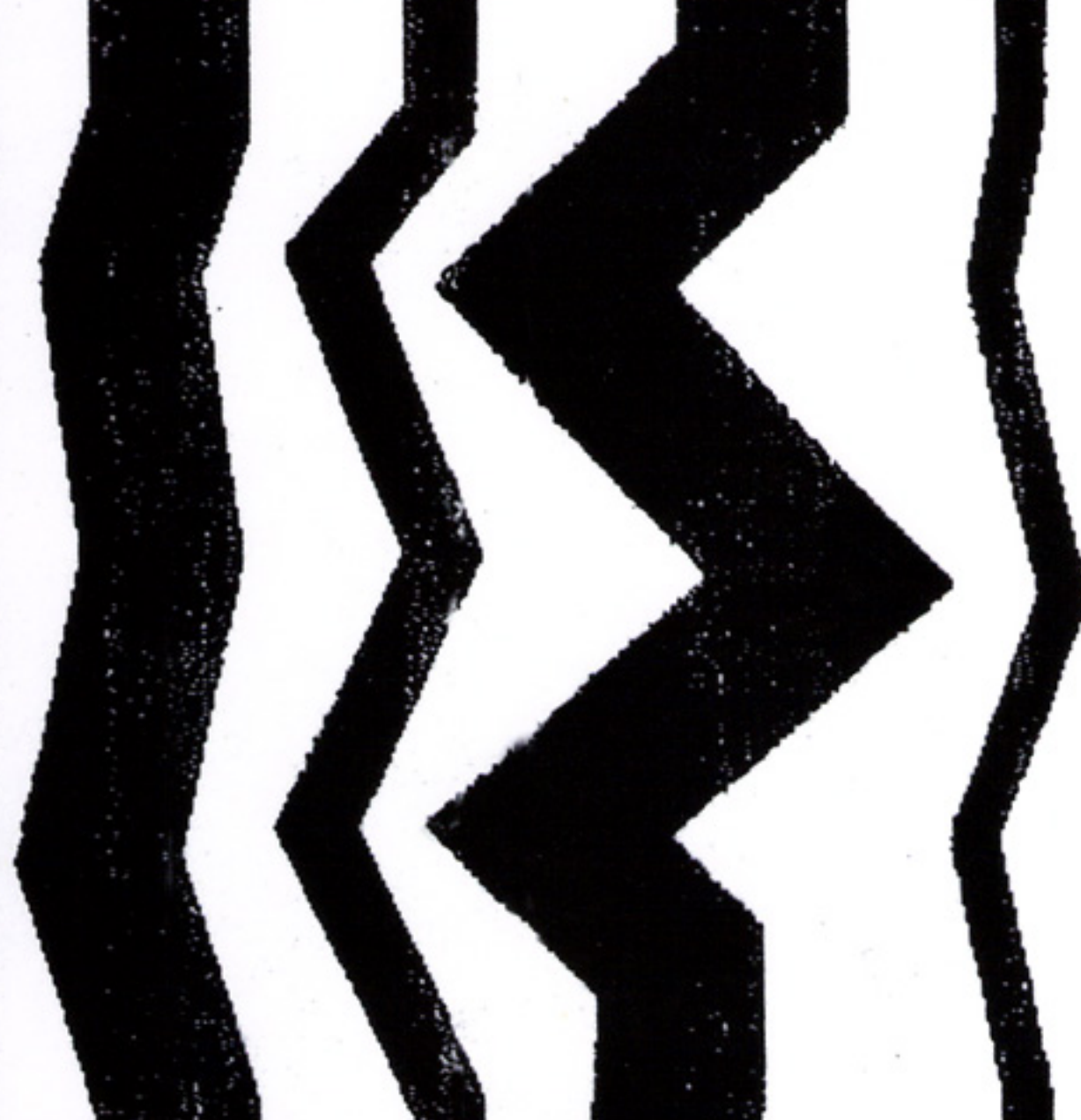


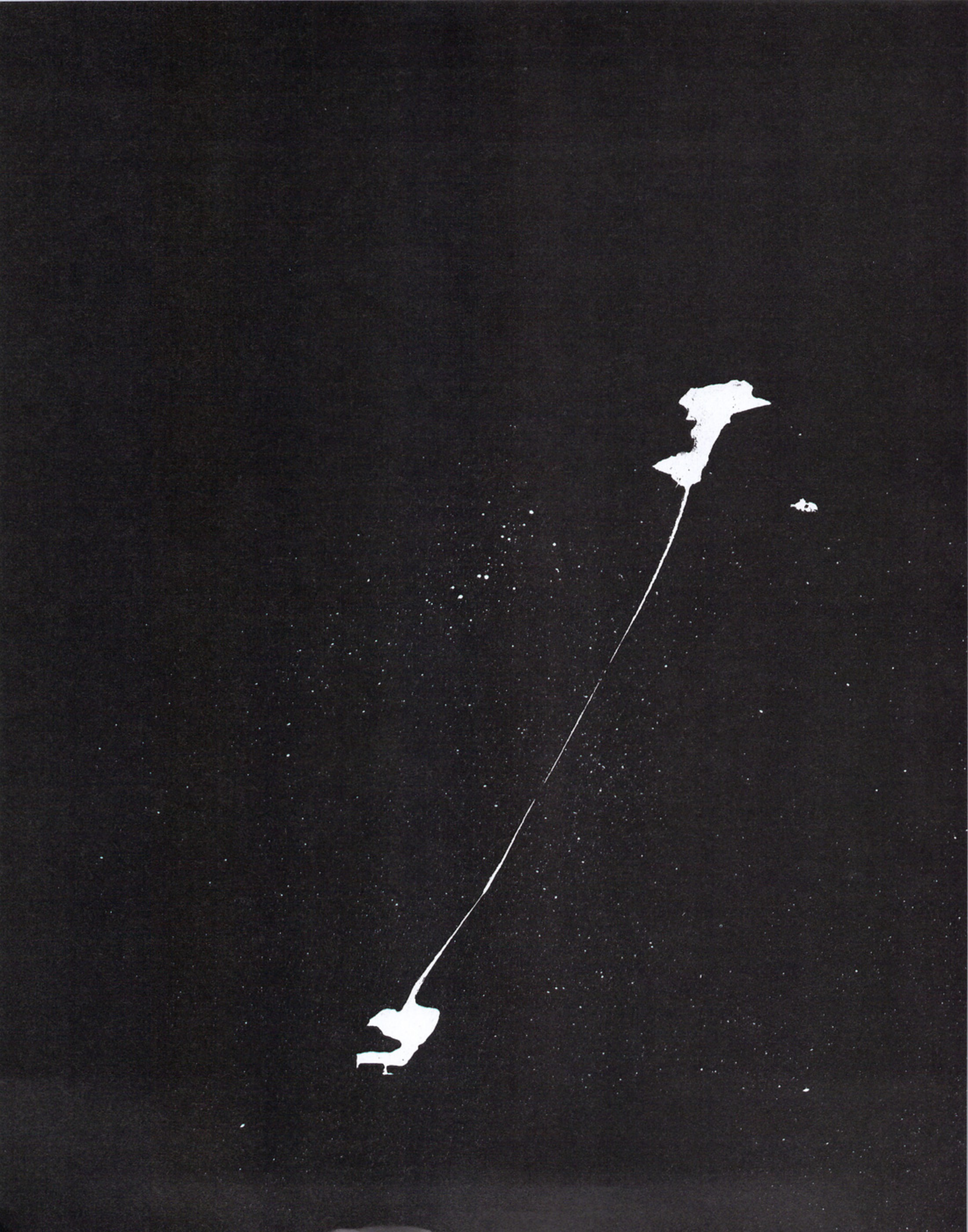
ADBUSTERS



PERIODICAL

why is there something
instead of nothing?



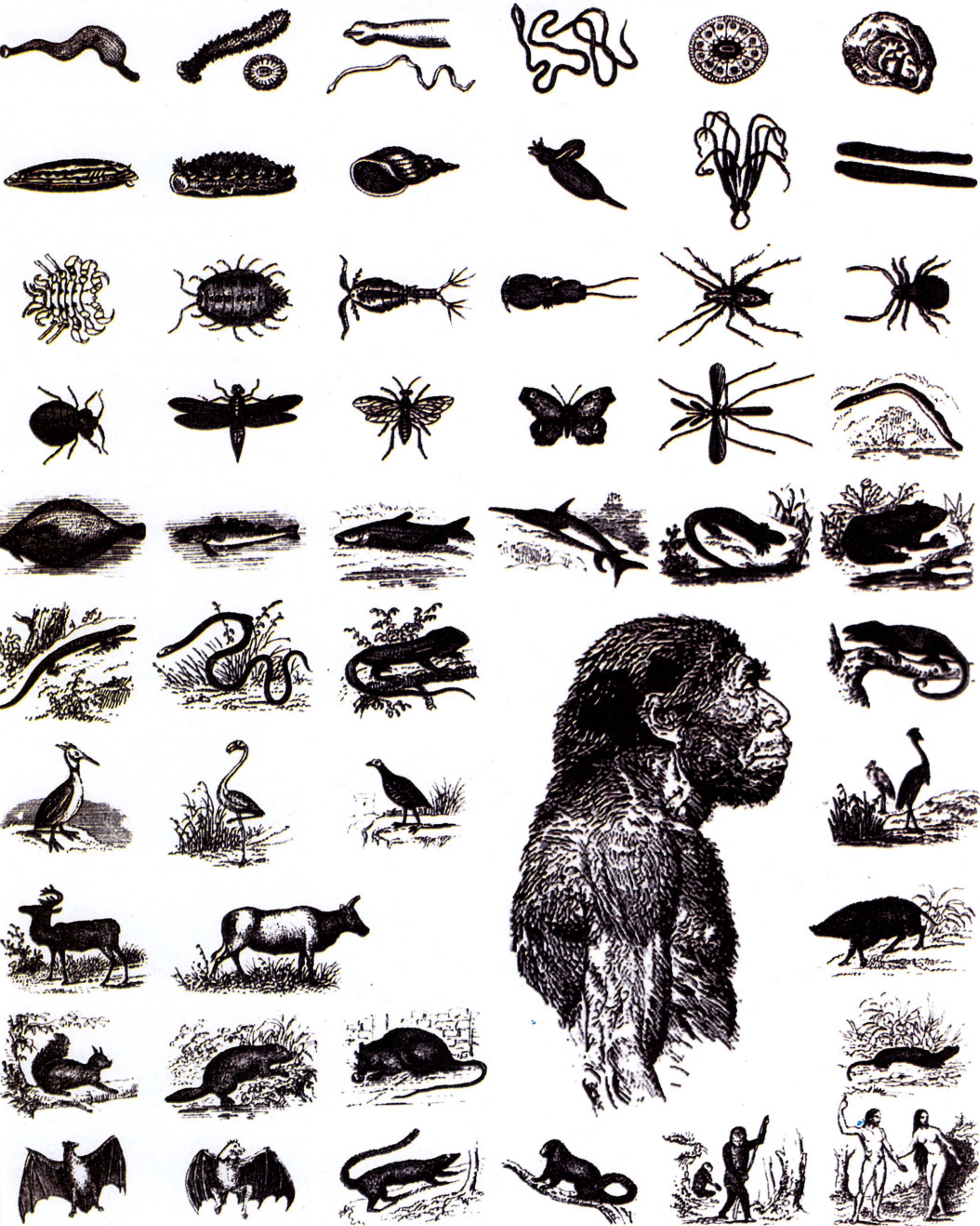


What happened
before the big bang?

Does life on Earth
have any meaning?









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STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Dave Niddrie

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INTERNS Evelyn Joo, Paul Hiebert, Hilary Masson

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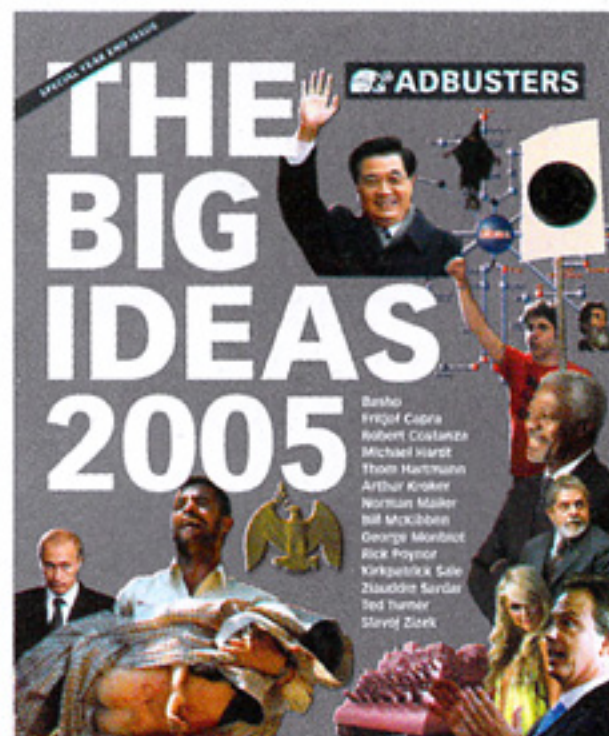
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Canada • Tel (604) 736-9401 / Fax (604) 737-6021 • Email info@adbusters.org
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I found your last issue "The Big Ideas of 2005" [Adbusters #57] to be extraordinarily inspiring. I'd like to suggest a follow up issue. Seeing as how the last issue was focused on ideas, it makes sense that the next be focused on the practical application of them. Maybe something along the lines of a "Handbook for Practical Solutions" or a "Revolutionary Bible"? Your Blackspot sneaker got me thinking that, in addition to pointing out problems, people need viable alternatives. Among all your readers, there are surely not only professional advertisers, but also engineers, economists, ecologists, architects, urban planners and even the odd lawyer! I'm thinking of expanding the approach of Blackspot sneaker to a larger scale . . . Think: developing grassroots-level think-tanks dedicated to coming up with serious alternatives to the status quo! The idea would be to develop a sort of "revolutionary collective" of progressive thinkers composed of people with various, complementary skills who could come up with whole-package



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solutions, including the design, its implementation, its business plan and even its marketing. We need blueprints to completely reshape all of society from agricultural practices to education programs to urban planning to sustainable development.

JACK TENG
Toronto, Ontario

I am working in an Inuit Community in the Canadian Arctic and your issue on S.I.I.2 [Adbusters #56] struck a chord with me.

Every day now when I walk through the village I think about how the economic collapse would affect these people. I wonder how long it would take to do so. Maybe they would feel the first pangs from Coca Cola and junk food withdrawal. We have addicted them, and cold turkey would be a big shock, but a good one. Sixty years ago heart disease, diabetes and dental disease were at a statistically insignificant incidence; now they are becoming endemic. The withdrawal of health care would be very, very difficult at first and many would succumb to the respiratory and other illnesses we have brought up here. Then the traditional shamanic medicine would rise again.

Eventually the diesel would run out. The power station would stop chugging, the lights would go out, the heaters would go cold, the ski-doo's would stop buzzing, the TVs would stop flickering, the telephones would stop ringing, soon the southern way of life would falter and stop dead. Then once more silence would return to the Arctic.

Then the hunters would harness

up the dogs and the women would sharpen their ulus. The human population is enormous compared to the last time hunting was the primary source of food. Maybe the animal populations would support the effort, maybe not.

Without an doubt there would be a decrease in the human population initially – there are not enough hunters among young Inuit. But they would learn again. They would learn everything again for it has only been 100 years since they began leaving the land.

The Inuit are resilient people. They would quickly adapt to making their own clothes, shelter and other necessities of life, just like they did for 4500 years. Just as quickly they would forget about our culture and the southern sicknesses of caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, plastic, diabetes, lung cancer, sugar, wood frame houses on treeless tundra, hypertension, internal combustion engines, depression, advertising, electricity, Christmas and Boxing Day, the male-dominated power structure, and television.

They would go back to the arms of Mother Earth – back to the hard life of hand to mouth, high infant mortality and a forty-five-year lifespan – but back to the balance of nature, for our experiment with the Inuit people has not been altogether kind.

I am definitely not one who hopes for the collapse – I can think of much better futures for humankind. However, I think I am living among a population group that could handle it and might possibly benefit from it.

DR. C.R.
Cape Dorset, Nunavut

Thanks for remembering Australia's indigenous people in *Adbusters* #56. We just re-elected our conservative leader who wages war alongside Bush, protects the interests of Australia's wealthy citizens, and refuses to say "sorry" to Australia's indigenous community for decades of state-sponsored displacement and brutality. In the recent election, Aboriginal issues never came up.

MICHAEL C. SMITH
Sydney, Australia

The recent re-election of John Howard has brought a sense of sadness, dismay and even fear to many Australians. This is our dark night of the soul. Let us mourn the lost chance for a positive change. Dress in black, wear an armband, go smash yourself, meditate, do whatever it is you do. Once we have looked inward and dealt with the darkness, a new activism needs to be born.

PAUL OOSTING
Tasmania, Australia

In her article "The Myth of Balance," [*Adbusters* #57] Kathleen Christison suggests an analogy between Israeli-Palestinian relations and those of American slave-owners and their slaves, or Catholic priests and sexually abused children. This is fundamentally inaccurate and profoundly absurd, for the obvious reason that, unlike slave-owners or abusive priests, Israel is not interested in using the Palestinian people for its own ends, be they work or pleasure. To compare the situation to other colonial conflicts also makes little sense, because it is not a colonial

conflict – Israel is not interested in dominating the Palestinian people. To accuse Israel of "ethnic cleansing" is not only erroneous, but serves to devalue the meaning of the phrase and thereby demean all true instances of genocide. There aren't words to express my outrage at such dangerously irresponsible distortions of truth.

JONATHAN RESNICK
Toronto, Ontario

Kathleen Christison doesn't appear to have learned anything during thirty years she spent in the Middle East. The reality of the situation is that the Palestinian government does not want peace. It advocates terror against Israelis and brainwashes its citizens into hating Jews. If the Palestinians are the underdogs, as Christison claims, then that is only because their government does not take care of them.

People who read the article and believe its nonsense will never know the truth: that no matter how many times the Israeli government has attempted to achieve peace, the Palestinian government has never cared. Nothing will ever change. Israel will always be at war.

ANONYMOUS

Your "Techno Courage" article [*Adbusters* #57] claims that the West relies on military technology to fight wars because we are so "mentally weak" and that we can't fight on even terms against the "agile" peoples of the third (i.e. Islamic) world because "we would lose."

I hate to interrupt the usual lefty romanticizing of the Muslim world, but if we are so mentally weak then how exactly did we

get to be so technologically superior in the first place? Do we in the West lead the world in technology, science and quality of life because we are so pathetically weak compared to the mental giants who live in squalor and mindlessly parrot verses out of the Koran as a way of getting ahead?

Wake up!

JAN BURTON
Toronto, Ontario

This is a letter to the person or people that are continuously stealing *Adbusters* from the Kelowna, British Columbia library. The library is a free public collection of information. Regardless of what you think about paying for an anti-consumer publication, taking things from the library does nothing to counter consumer culture. There are many stores in this city that profit from the sale of *Adbusters*. Why not steal from them?

ARLIN
Kelowna, British Columbia

Being a mail carrier I have had the rare luxury of taking long walks outside everyday. As I walk, I deliver birthday presents, holiday cards and an occasional letter from abroad. Unfortunately, the majority of paper I deposit in mailboxes each day is printed with advertisements. Some houses receive 20-plus catalogues daily. On occasion, the homeowners leave their garage doors ajar. From floor to ceiling I can see the resulting collection of their consumption. As I depart for delivery to the next house, I maneuver around the parked SUV that they are so

convinced they deserve.

KALETIS DEMACON
Anaheim, California

I provide one-on-one assistance for a student whose English assignments have become shameless Coca-Cola publicity. The students had to brainstorm about Coke and write essays based on what they knew, collect as many Coca-Cola advertisements as possible, look for Coke ads on television, and collect any articles about Coca-Cola that they could find. For their next project, they have to show the variety of products Coke has to offer and their presence all over the world. I know this is going on elsewhere. Schools are supposed to be safe places for children, not corporate training grounds.

JONATHAN JANSSEN
Lancaster, California

I'm only 17 and I believe I'm just as intelligent as the rest of you anti-corporate USA-bashers out there. I attend a snotty private school where the moms don't work; they simply consume and take up space. Both my parents are professors who hate school events.

I used to dream of being an architect until I got 12 percent on a math test in grade 7. Then it was a lawyer, then a detective. I am fascinated by crime. But more and more I have been interested in politics. The corrupt politicians in our socialized "democracies" grab my attention. My new dream is to be the leader of Canada's New Democratic Party.

My mom has her priorities in a list of five c's: 1) cars 2) clubs 3)

chalets 4) clothes 5) cottages.

ANIVA LEVY
Toronto, Ontario

I'm thinking too much these days, and my inner voice terrorized me with questions and exclamations. Here's the scene:

Me, blankly staring into the square portal of television land. I feel like a puppet. Or living death. Mostly I do this to learn the sickness of our society. What a perfect teacher! I think TV has driven me a bit mad. The truth is disgusting. The truth is me and you. Together we must learn how to gain a more nomadic way of life.

TERRA

I came home very late a few nights ago and one of my roommates had left the TV on. I immediately thought to myself, "Wow. That's beautiful – finally there is something good on TV." I took a picture of it and now, it's my wallpaper.

KARL CZARNY
Ottawa, Ontario

Nobody knows if the destructive nuclear bombs we've produced have disrupted the Earth's balance, but there is a good chance they've produced some negative effects. Perhaps the latest tsunami disaster is nature's delayed way of getting back at humanity for exploding mad bombs underground years ago.

MICHAEL LEVY
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Cultural Revolution is my business. But Cultural Revolution without Personal Revolution is No Revolution at all. So please consider the following idea:

highlight, on the cover of your magazine, men like a) Osho, b) Edmond Bordeaux Szekely, c) Yogananda, d) Trungpa, e) Rudolf Steiner. These men are the most influential figures in Personal Revolution from the past century. Particularly Osho. His capacity for illuminating the control methods used by us, on us – and simply making things clear – is unparalleled.

I think your audience would find an introduction to him very beneficial.

MICHAEL PETERS
Detroit, Michigan

When I was a student in the US I protested against the war in Iraq. When my father back in Ecuador found out, he was enraged because he worried that I might have my visa cancelled and be deported. I can understand his concern. If a Latin American, or anyone who is not “blessed” by being American is refused the American visa, they are a

nobody, a zero, a true alien of the American Empire.

Recently, Free Trade Agreement talks were held in my hometown Guayaquil, Ecuador. I expected protesters, but was surprised to find that the buses carrying some of the protesters were detained and prevented from entering the city. Ecuador is a disgusting little colony where, under American orders, we do not have the right to free expression.

It was a sickening feeling. These days, the invisible imperialism can be sensed with one breath. People can not even protest in their own country. Maybe you also need an American visa to be able to protest.

ANONYMOUS

Many people were shocked that the Nazi horrors of WWII happened with the consent and even support of most of the population. But most Germans claimed afterwards not to have

known anything about the concentration camps. Neighbors looked the other way as Jews and other unwanted people were “deported” in herds like cattle.

Today, an interesting parallel arises in the midst of the Third World War, led by ruthless corporations and leaders of rogue-states. Most people don’t seem too concerned about the worldwide destruction going on right now. The vocabulary of denial is still the same: exaggerations . . . rumors . . . no 100 percent proof . . . contradictory news . . . etc.

Some believe technological advances will save us. Others hope “someone” will turn the rudder around before things get really bad. Doesn’t history teach us anything?

KURT LIETNER
Vienna, Austria

LETTERS: editor@adbusters.org



Here comes a band rethinking rock, communicating without words. Taka Akira describes Mono’s latest album, *Walking cloud and deep red sky, Flag fluttered and the sun shined*, as a “soundtrack to the horror.” The young quartet from Japan writes music to put you right where they want you: in the middle of sonic confusion, at the vortex of beauty, pain, sorrow and happiness. Is Mono post-punk, post 9/11, post Bush-takes-over-the-world? Who cares? More important things need to be accomplished. On their way to folding one thousand paper cranes for humanity, Mono won’t die trying. “I want to express joy and hope as a human, and communication between people beyond borders or cultural differences,” Akira explains. With volume alone, the music makes you wonder, what horrors lay near.

Mark Rogers



Switzerland's Lukas Meier can lay claim to the best Buy Nothing Day poster of 2004



Here in rural Telemark, Norway, my husband and I have an ancient, 100-acre farm without a road, without electricity, without running water, without a computer or mobile telephone or washing machine or CD player or remote-control carrot-dicer . . . without corporate products, including Barbie dolls or Nike sneakers. We have a fjord-horse to do most of the heavy farm work, goats for milk/cheese/butter/sausages, an ancient breed of sheep for wool and meat, chickens for eggs, a dog and cat and soon a Telemark cow, a piggy or two, some geese and bees. I should add that all of these creatures are also our beloved companions, even if we have to eat someone occasionally. We also have a lovely organic garden, grow some of our own grains, pick bucket after bucket of wild berries and mushrooms and have moose-hunting and trout-fishing rights as well. (Dear, well-meaning vegetarians, I have been a strict vegetarian at least half of my 39 years, and I doubt that anyone could love the non-human creatures more than I. Once I had a funeral for a moth I accidentally squished.)

JENNY HAMPE
Telemark, Norway



As a mom of three children, I get a lot of compliments about my ability to juggle everyone's schedules and get everywhere on time. I have a nice house and car, a wonderful husband, great kids, a supportive church community, and my parents live nearby. I can honestly say that my life is everything I wanted it to be. And still I feel as though something's missing. If life has a recipe, there's an important ingredient missing, and I don't know what it is.

G'day Adbusters,
Buy Nothing Day began very early for jammer Paul. The breakfast host on a major AM talk station (774 ABC Melbourne) was the one big media outlet to show an interest in our press release. The host conducted an extremely sympathetic telephone discussion for over five minutes – more free publicity than we could possibly have hoped for. This was at 7:10 a.m., much earlier than the interviewee is usually articulate!

A varied group of six to twelve jammers spent the afternoon at a table by the front doors of the biggest department store in the city. This store has a “tradition” of putting on a display of animated Christmas-themed diorama things in its front windows – the kids drag their parents there to see the windows, then drag them inside to buy the associated toys.

Our arrival was greeted by six to eight cops and a police car (parked in the pedestrian mall). They clearly expected some kind of blockade, but lost interest and left when it was clear we were the law-abiding citizens we all, coincidentally, are.

Our arrival also prompted calls from the department store to the local city council. At least four of their “public space” officials turned up, made mobile calls, watched us, etc. We'd had no less than three separate conversations with said city council's public permits department. Each time, the answer was the same: “We don't know how to classify you, so we can't give you a permit. But we also can't stop you, so long as you're not blocking pedestrian movement and aren't littering.” Easy. So the city official types, after telling us to turn the music down, also lost interest and left.

Rounds one and two to the jammers!

The aim of the day was to spread the word, but also where possible cut up the credit cards of random strangers. This proved harder than we expected – seems the locals LOVE their credit cards. The suggestion that we cut them up was often greeted with something like genuine horror! Nonetheless, we managed to take \$38,000 worth of credit out of circulation. Each cutting was videotaped and greeted with

much cheering. A large number of shoppers were interviewed about their shopping and how good it felt to cut up their cards.

Most memorable card cutter was the wheel-chair bound woman who'd heard about us on a mailing list and came down especially. Three grand she owed on the thing. Thanks to us she at least won't acquire any more debt.

We received a great deal of encouragement from everyone who stopped by to see what the fuss was about. And a few weird questions like “What'll it cost me?” and “What does Buy Nothing mean?”

What does every event like this need? Shopping Zombies of course! We had at least seven participants don white makeup and wander the streets and shops around the mall. I can report with pride that they were thrown out of the Nike store, the David Jones' store and possibly Myers as well.

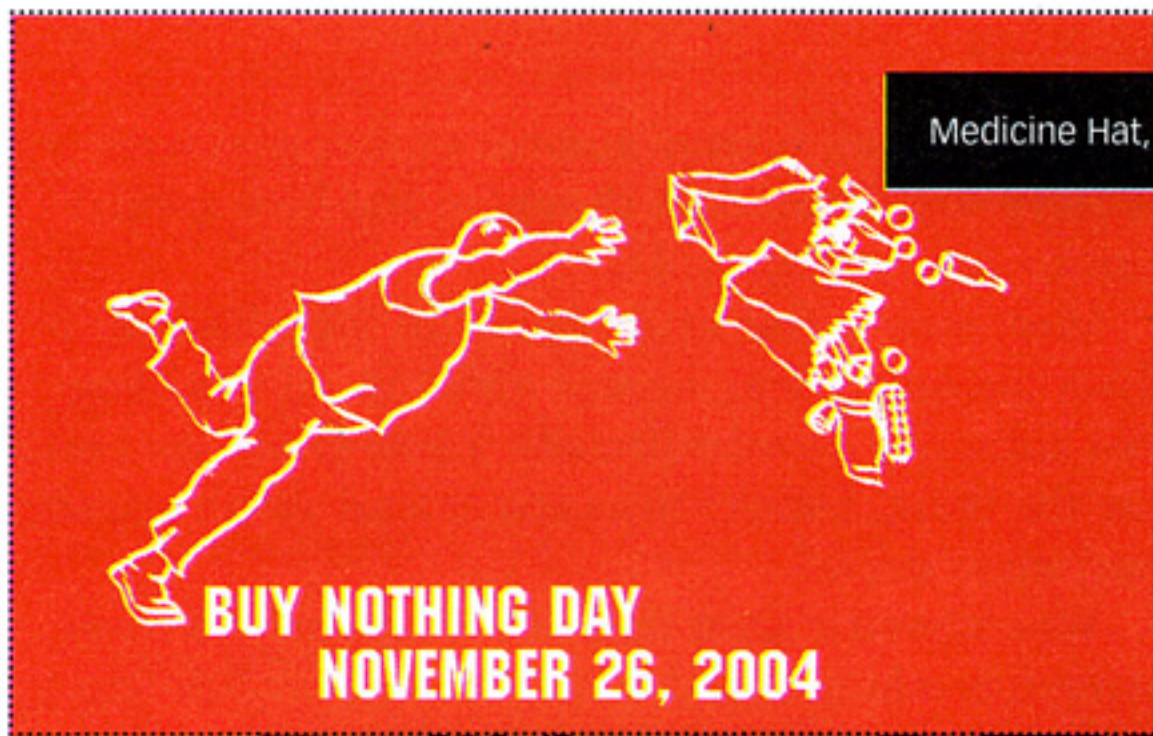
The day was rounded off by the arrival of the Dresses of Mass Seduction, an extremely hairy troop of men in dresses singing appropriately parodied songs – “I Bought Some More and the Store Won,” for example.

Other media: Community television station Channel 31 interviewed one of the organizers, and one of the commercial networks sent down a camera, but weren't actually interested in hearing us talk. The cameraman was suitably impressed however – wished he had his credit cards with him.

Huge thanks to Jammers George, Sam, Geoff, Josh and Eva. We've made a great start here.

Jammer Paul





Medicine Hat, Alberta

White Rock, British Columbia



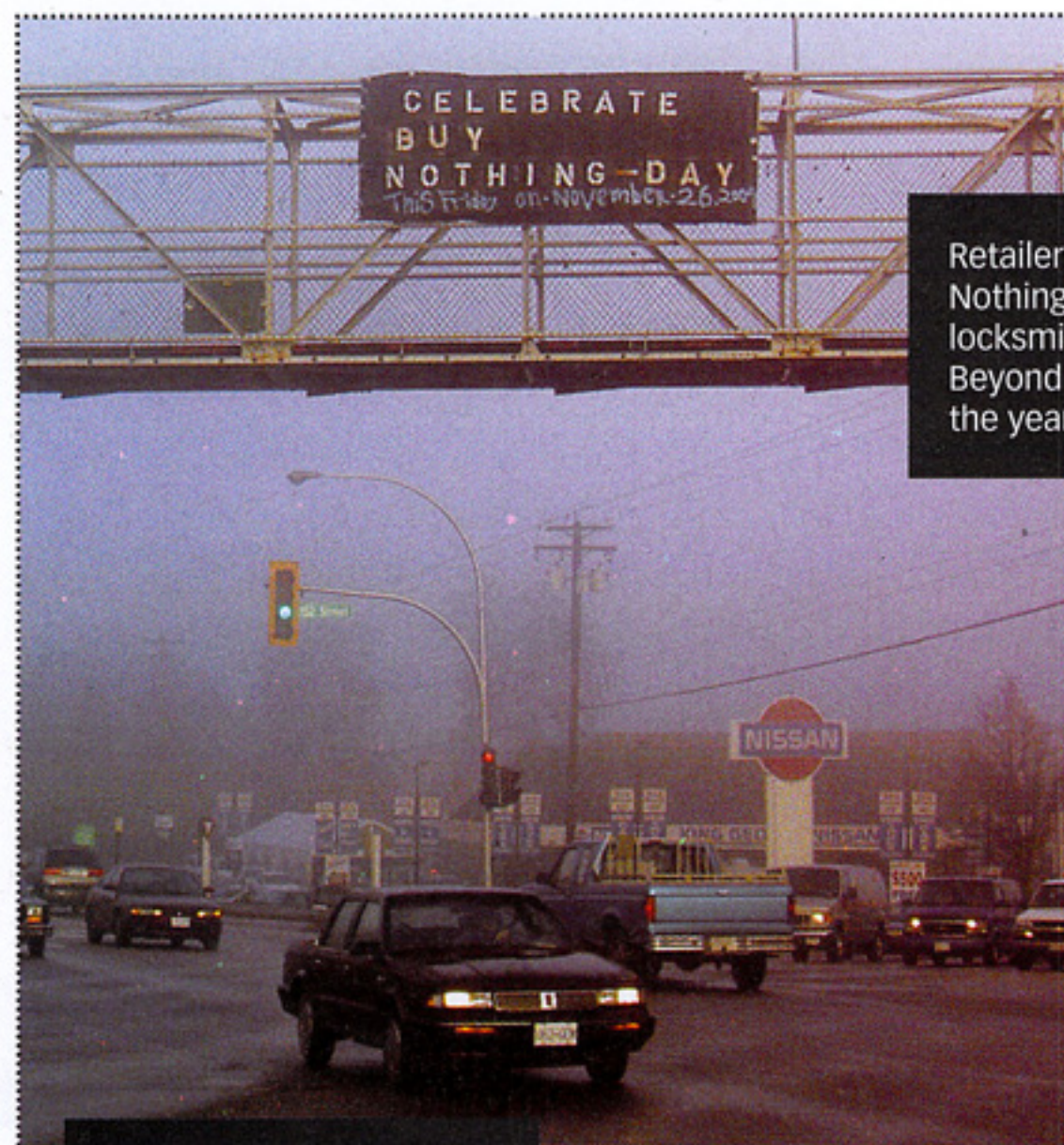
Seoul, Korea



We celebrate here in Delaware by going to a local mall dressed up as marketers for the product NOTHING™. Shoppers' reactions to our costume are overwhelmingly positive, but mall management is not amused. This year, as in the past, security guards confronted us as we promoted NOTHING™. They told us that we were soliciting "something" and would have to leave the mall premises. When asked to clarify our transgression, the head of security replied, "You are soliciting a reaction from people." The state police then arrived and told us to leave the mall or face arrest. We obliged, but before we were able to get to our car, policemen surrounded us in the parking lot and placed us in handcuffs for not leaving the mall fast enough. We decried the infringement of our freedom of speech, but while the police drove us to be processed, we were told to study freedom of speech laws a bit more, because "they don't apply on private property."

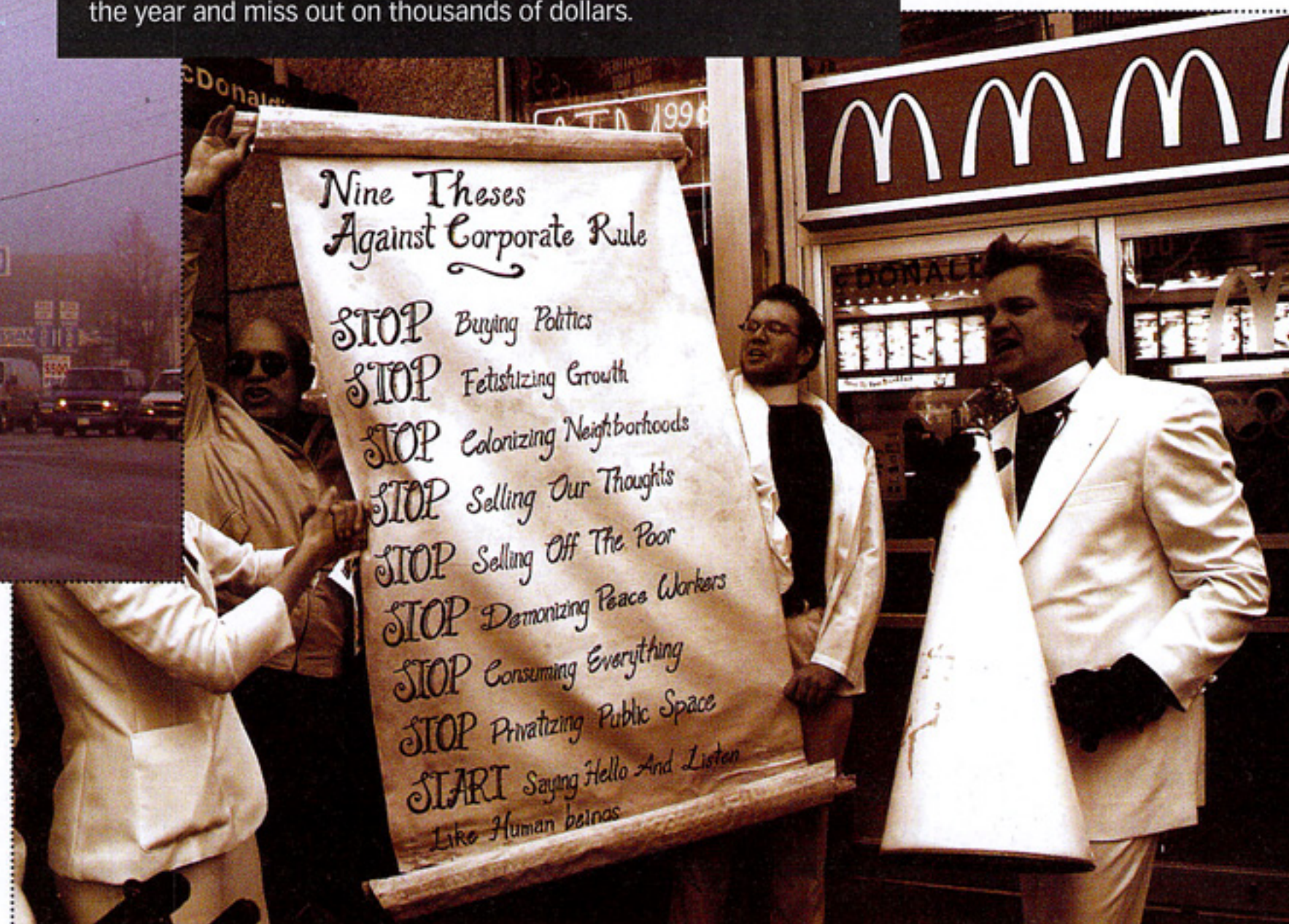
In an era of declining public spaces and the rise of malls as the new "town centers" should not "freedom of speech" extend to these quasi-public commercial spaces? More importantly, what is so very dangerous about a humorous promotion of purchasing NOTHING?

Anna White



Surrey, British Columbia

Retailers in Lafayette, Louisiana woke up on the morning of Buy Nothing Day to find their locks glued shut. Despite frantic calls to locksmiths, stores like Toys "R" Us, Old Navy, and Bed, Bath and Beyond were forced to open late on the biggest shopping day of the year and miss out on thousands of dollars.



We posted the nine Theses Against Corporate Rule at a McDonald's inside the Times Square jungle of logos. Then the NYPD arrested Reverend Billy and Sister Laura for exorcising a Starbucks cash register. They sang the First Amendment inside the 54th Street Precinct House and apparently the cops and staff present for the performance were humming it all night long, despite themselves. May it haunt their dreams. Reverend Billy

Whatever happened to the Simplicity Movement?

I was thinking about this as I spent a recent weekend cleaning two messy closets. Seven years ago, *USA Today* had one of those wave-of-the-future articles on the Simplicity Movement. It estimated that 10 to 12 percent of American adults were "scaling back, paring down, doing without," and predicted the number would rise to 15 percent by 2000.

Yet the materialistic urge rages on. "One of the fastest-growing industries in the United States is commercial self-storage," notes John de Graaf, Seattle-based producer of the PBS documentary, *Affluenza*. "It's an irony that with house sizes nearly doubling since the 50s, and family sizes being smaller, you have the enormous rise of commercial self-storage." Simplifying must be like dieting. It's something people very much want to do, but

not enough to forgo pleasures of the moment. Some older friends recently downsized from a big house to an apartment, and observed:

- At least half of what we bought (excluding food and clothing) in the past 40 years was a complete waste of money.
- At least half of what's left we probably used once or twice and then never again.

Meanwhile, if you can't simplify, you can fake the look. This time of year brings out the advice columns on storing treasures, organizing rooms and generally forcing a bit of Zen tranquility onto the household chaos. Do these things, they tell us, and your living room will turn into a modern masterpiece of uncluttered walls and spotless floors.

Sure . . . there goes another weekend.

Froma Harrop

At <antipreneur.org> people are talking grassroots capitalism and blackspot anti-logo business ventures:

Idea: How about a simple white T-shirt with a black mark in the middle?

RANDY

Blackspot jeans seem like a logical extension of the Blackspot sneaker. Anti-501s anyone?

TIM BAILEY

Aren't sunglasses just as ridiculously expensive as sneakers? Let's come up with lesnses based on a double blackspot design.

HUREN MARSH

I'm already an antipreneur. I own a co-op computer store. We manufacture our own line of custom built PCs (Microsoft optional), recycle, and pay employees a fair share of the store.



After the dot com boom turned bust, the industry left a lot of highly skilled and talented people in the lurch. Hence my store's name, "Wiz Kids." The concept is simple: low overhead, quality products, and highly skilled employees who love their job. A lot of people ask me how I can compete with Dell, Bestbuy, or HP, and the answer is simple: I don't. All of my products carry a three-year warranty serviced by the same people who designed them (not customer service outsourced to India), my sales

staff is highly educated and informed, we never upsell and one of my main goals is to never carry the same products you find in a big box store.

ADAM ZIMMERLI

I think the idea of having a chain of restaurants that serves only locally grown, organic foods is pure genius. Especially if to-go items were served in that new styrofoam that is made of potato starch and limestone and biodegrades as quickly as food does.

DANI VACHON

Let's open some Blackspot bookstores that could sell products from the Blackspot music label and house a Blackspot café – kick Barnes and Noble's ass.

JOE HILLER

We're starting the world's first Blackspot Culture Shop in Vancouver this spring. It'll have organic coffee, revolutionary magazines, books, CDs, DVDs, Blackspot products of all kinds. We'll send our design template free to any antipreneur who is interested in opening up a Culture Shop in their city. Email <antipreneur@adbusters.org>.

- Eds

A very interesting woman in Salt Lake City has opened a unique restaurant called One World Café with no menu and no prices. You eat from a selection of available items (tasty and organic). You pay only what you think it's worth.

She's been around for just over a year and a half, has several employees, and is breaking even.

Not a bad record for a restaurant breaking all the rules.

STEVE WYNN

Check out Higher Grounds Trading Co. for an example of how to use the marketplace for social change. It's a 100 percent fair trade coffee company that buys coffee from around the world. In one case, it works directly with Zapatista cooperatives in Chiapas, Mexico to provide education and fair trade support from the front lines of the struggle against corporate globalization.

JAMES

As someone who has tried to start a socially responsible micro-business, I can tell you that the normal funding routes are just not open. If you can't get money from friends and family, you're in trouble. So why don't you build up a small fund and use it to provide low interest loans to anti-corporate and socially responsible organizations?

WILL

I want to start an anti-corporation that manufactures bicycles and related accessories as an alternative to Trek, Giant, and Nike – who is using Lance Armstrong to take over a significant share of the accessories market.

I'd like to know the details of the Blackspot sneaker business structure so I can model "Blackspot cycling" in the same fashion. For example, is the anti-corporation in fact a legal



corporation? Is it set to consistently work as "one vote per product purchased?" I'd love to see this spread like wildfire.

CLINT BUTTLER



on the internet.

BRODIE ALBRIGHT

How about a Blackspot Taxi Service that uses only pedicabs, motorcycle taxis and electric cars?

ANONYMOUS

Party and the Republican Party which are pretty much the same when it comes down to it. How about launching the Blackspot Party? Political change must come from the bottom.

RANDAL

It'd be great to have Blackspot Radio that could start out by streaming broadcasts

Beyond changing products, why not change the system? Americans have the Democratic

*Send your ideas to
antipreneur@adbusters.org*



WWW.ANTIPRENEUR.ORG
WWW.BLACKSPOTSNEAKER.ORG

For years the old pattern went on. People were jaded by megacorporate control of so much of their lives, but couldn't see how they might take some power back. We decided to launch the counterattack. The result is the world's first global anti-brand – the Blackspot sneaker. Made from organic hemp in a Portuguese union shop, everything about the Blackspot, from its red toe tip and hand-drawn anti logo to its renegade billboards and TV ads, is designed to kick Phil Knight's ass. We're aiming to cut into his market share, unswoosh his swoosh

and give birth to a new kind of cool in the sneaker industry.

Join us. Buy a pair and become a shareholder in The Blackspot Anticorporation. Your ongoing involvement is critical. Together, we can revolutionize the sneaker industry and then move on to "blackspot" other industries: music, restaurants, bio-diesel outlets . . . culture shops . . . vodka! We marry social activism with grassroots antipreneurial zeal and change the ugly face of corporate capitalism.

Kalle Lasn, CEO
The Blackspot Anticorporation

8,760,000

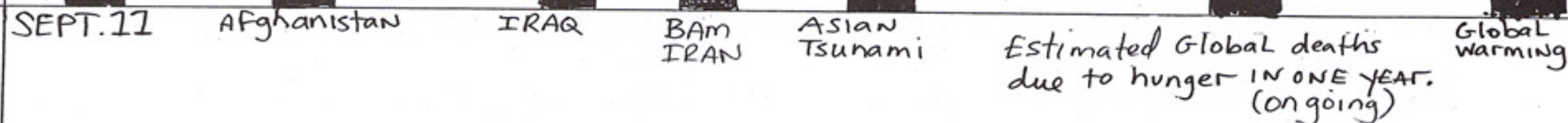
I was on a plane when news of the Indian Ocean tsunami first penetrated the consciousness of CNN and Fox News. A satellite delivered the live update to the small TV screen embedded above my tray table: "Next up, a tsunami hits Thailand. Thousands are thought to be dead, including some Americans on vacation." My first thought was that it sounded like a bad movie premise, starring plucky American tourists. How awful to have to admit that I thought that first, before feeling regret and concern.

Watching the death toll mount over the next week was an exercise in intellectualized grief. One day it was 13,000, then 60,000, then 160,000. My brain said: that's a lot of people. My brain said: each one of those deaths is a family catastrophe, grieving relatives, lives changed forever. In the newspapers, underneath the banner headlines with their grim numbers, stories of those grieving families proliferated, doing their best to tug on my heartstrings. But still I shed no tear. I worried that I had no heartstrings left to tug – I wondered how I'd gone so numb.

Then I read in the paper that the writer and director of a recent and terrible adventure movie, *Open Water*, was vacationing in Phuket, Thailand when the waves struck. His plucky wife rescued several Swedish tourists, pulling them up a bamboo ladder to safety. I'm very afraid the movie won't be long in coming.

Eliza Strickland

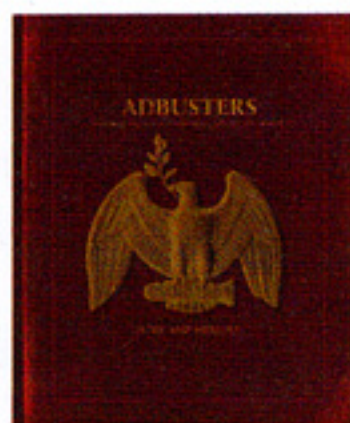
160,000
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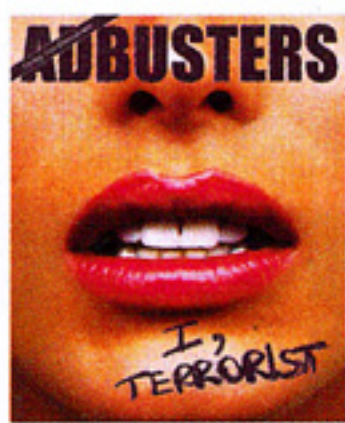
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Order online: <www.adbusters.org> or email: <subscriptions@adbusters.org>



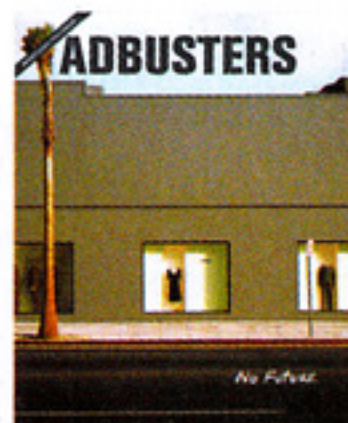
52 Terror Without End



53 Hope And Memory



54 I, Terrorist



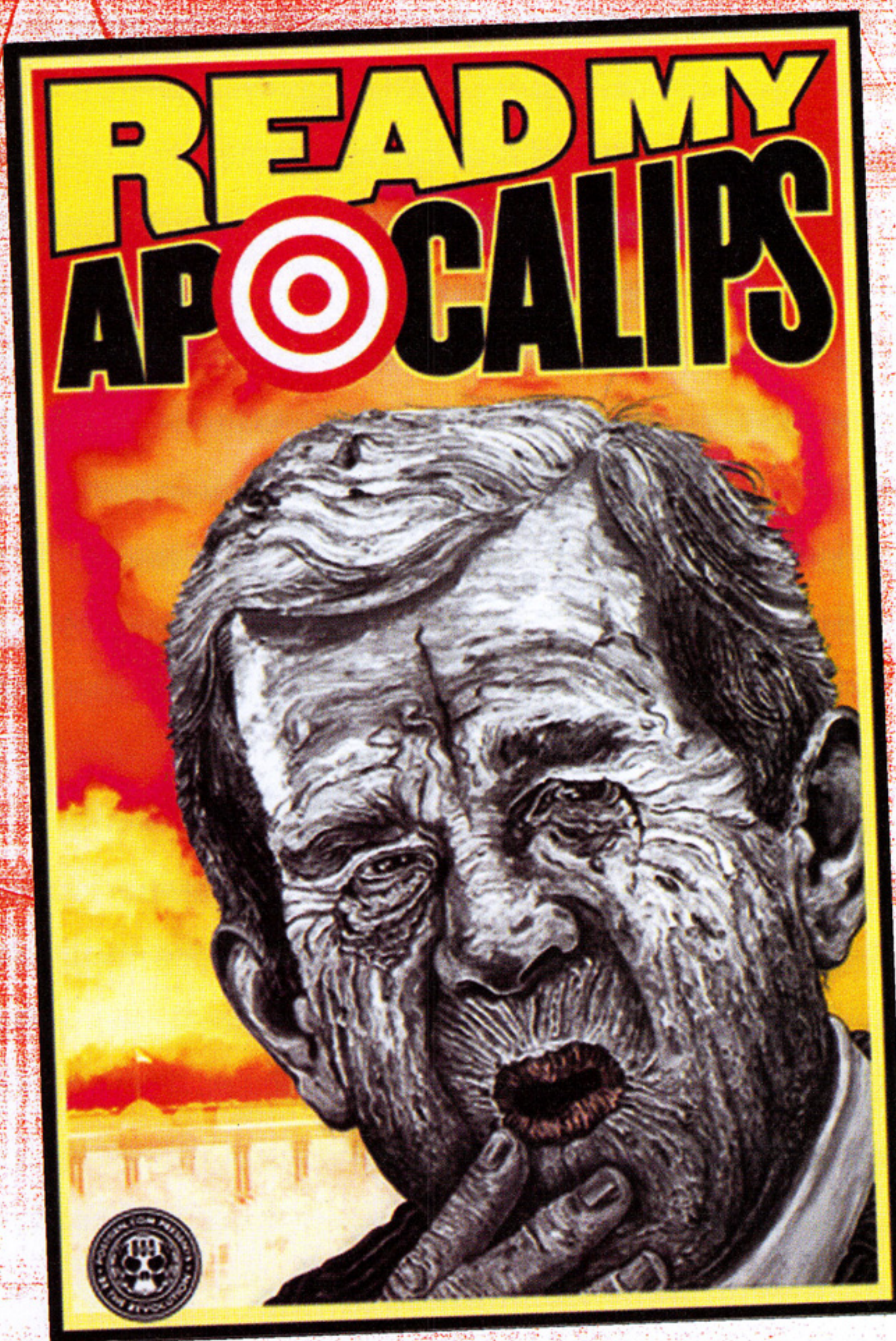
55 No Future



56 We're Back



57 The Big Ideas 2005



"You think he's an idiot, don't you? . . . all of you do, up and down the West Coast, the East Coast, a few blocks in southern Manhattan called Wall Street. Let me clue you in. We don't care. You see, you're outnumbered 2 to 1 by folks in the big, wide middle of America, busy working people who don't read the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* or the *LA Times*. And you know what they like? They like the way he walks and the way he points, the way he exudes confidence. They have faith in him. And when you attack him for his malaprops, his jumbled syntax, it's good for us. Because you know what those folks don't like? They don't like you!"

- Bush senior media advisor Mark McKinnon
speaking to New York Times reporter Ron Suskind

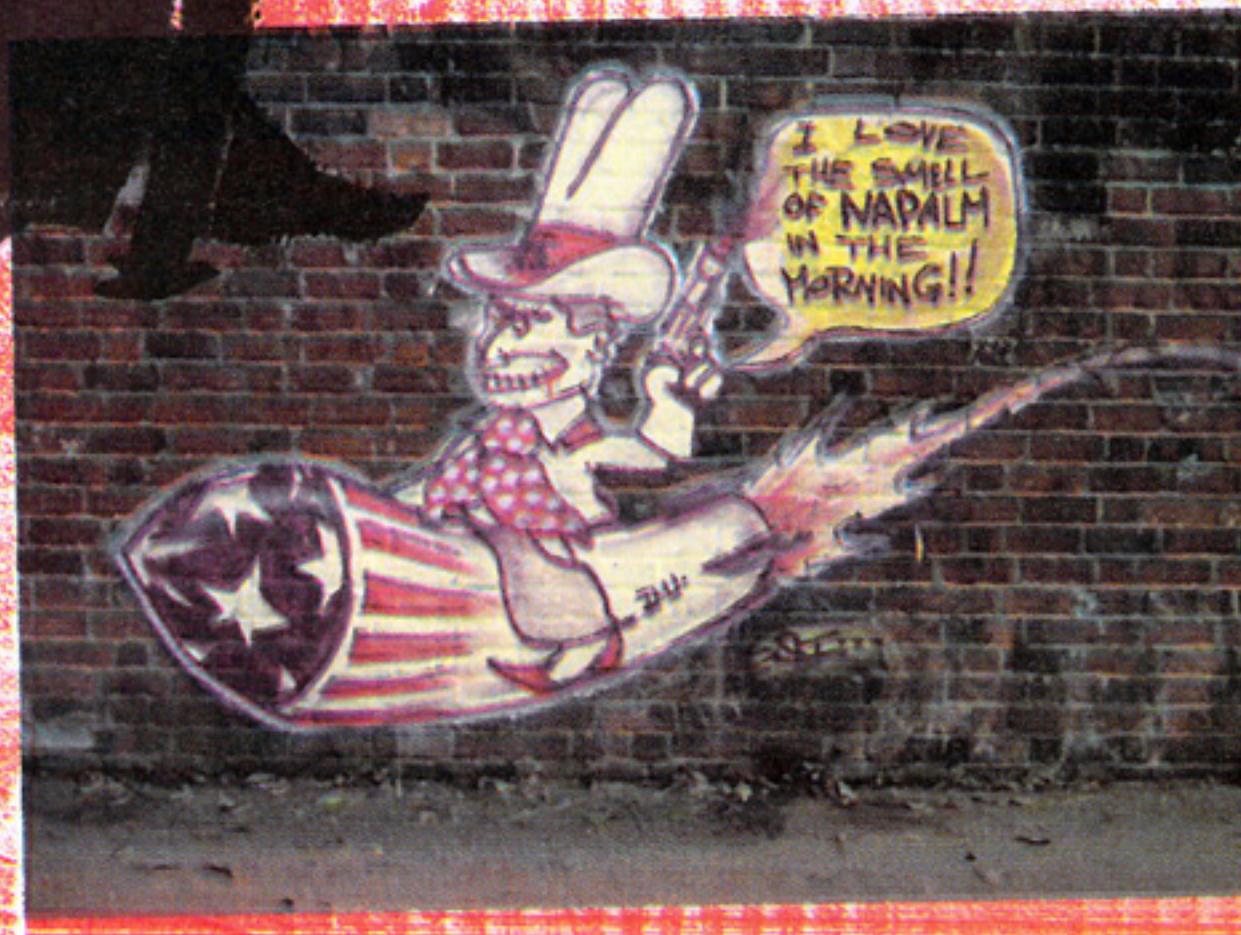


BUSH IN CAR: WILLIAM STEFFEY

Kerry never gave a clear, consistent message. He was, from the outset, the anti-brand . . . The Democrats even supported this argument by declaring, "Anyone but Bush!" He was never the challenger brand, offering up something better.

Imagine if Pepsi's tagline was "Anything but Coke." Or BMW claimed, "We're not Mercedes." It doesn't happen that way for good reason. Rather, when you think of BMW, you think performance. With Pepsi, you think youth. Clear. Simple.

*Abe Novick, Senior VP, Eisner Communications,
in Advertising Age, Oct. 18, 2004*



The Democrats have ceded to Republicans a monopoly on the moral and spiritual sources of American politics. They will not recover as a party until they again have candidates who can speak to those moral and spiritual yearnings – but turn them to progressive purposes in domestic policy and foreign affairs.

- Michael J. Sandel

ROCK AGAINST BUSH VOL 2

CHENEY IS A CREEP

W: WORTHLESS

IDIOTS RULE

BAPTISTS ARE WEIRD

BUSH BELONGS BEHIND BARS

FUCK THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

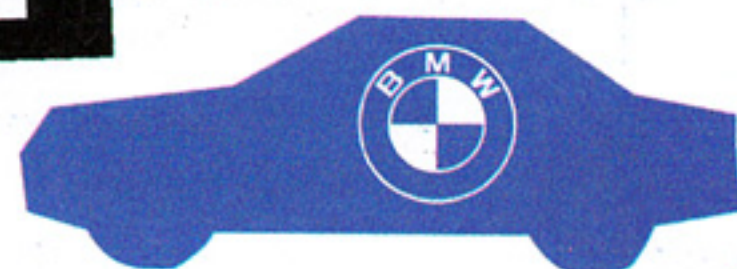
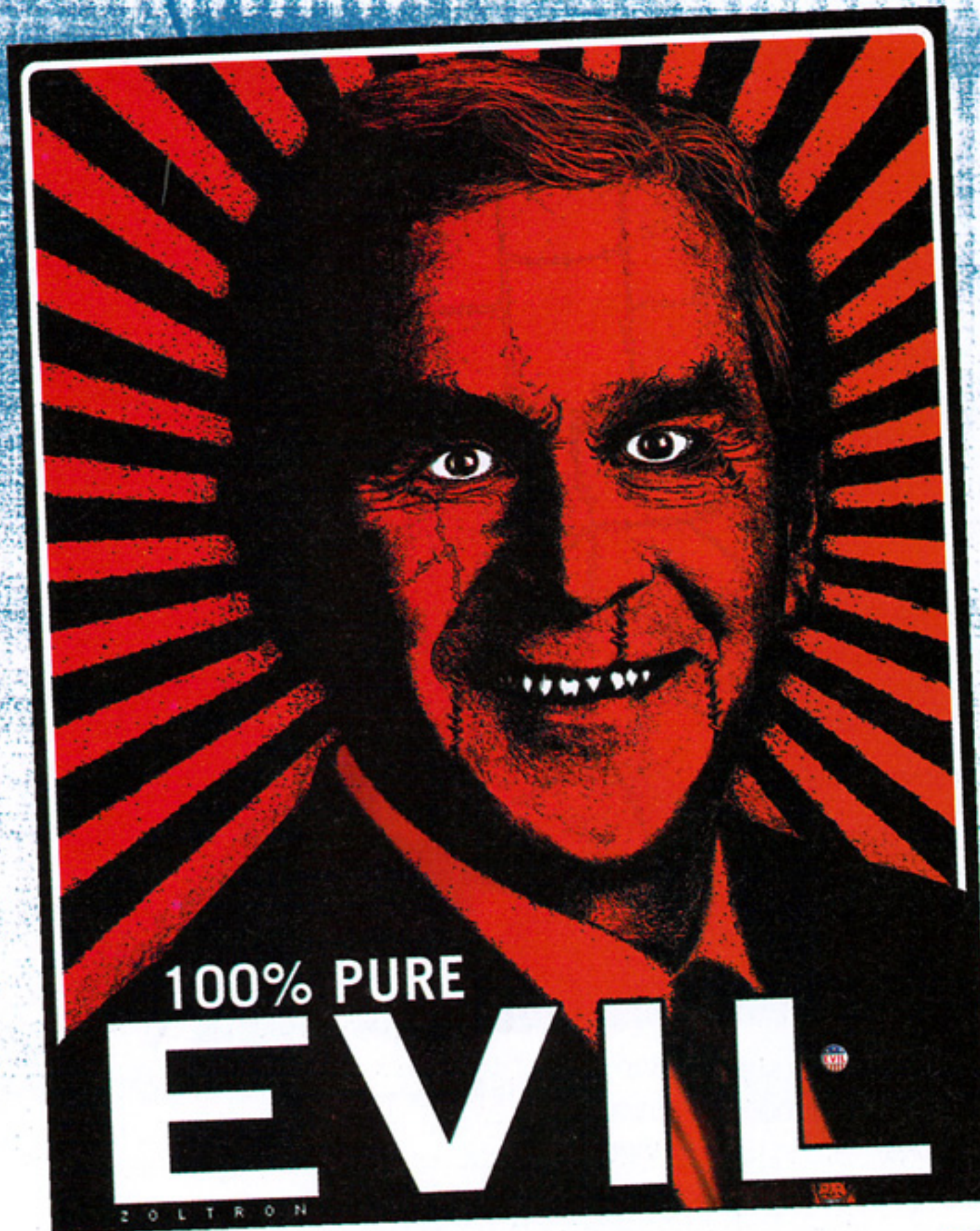
RIGHT-WING RADIO: THE VOICE OF SATAN



What happened to the youth vote that was supposed to save the Dems? Even with rock stars and other beautiful people enticing them to the polls, barely half of the 18-29 crowd bothered to turn out – the same percentage that voted in 2000. In the words of Hunter S. Thompson, "Those little bastards betrayed us again."

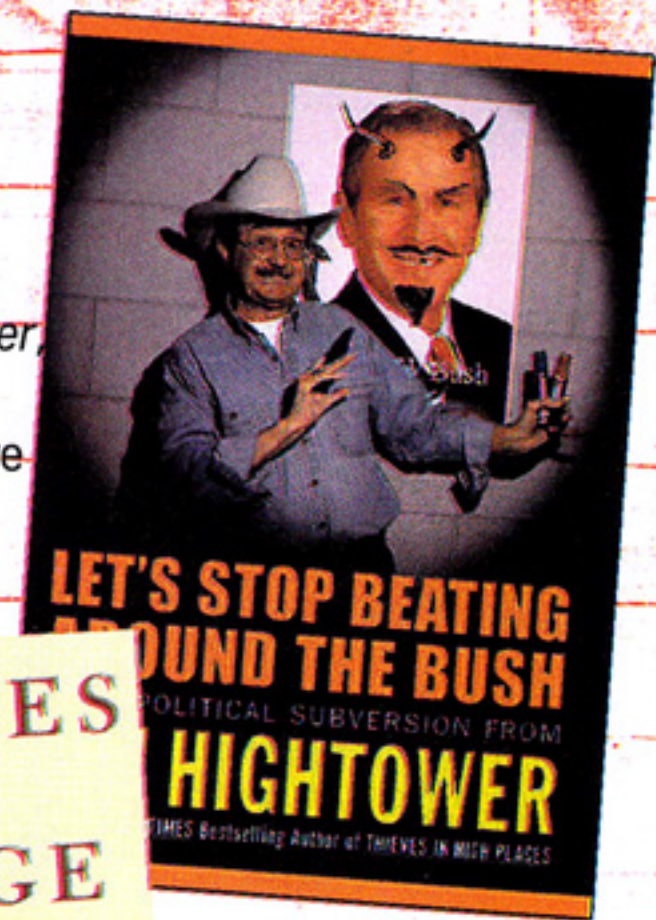
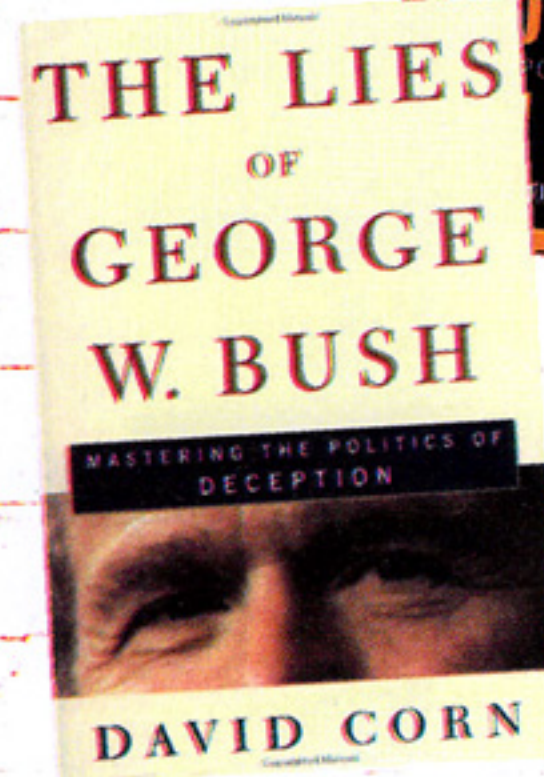
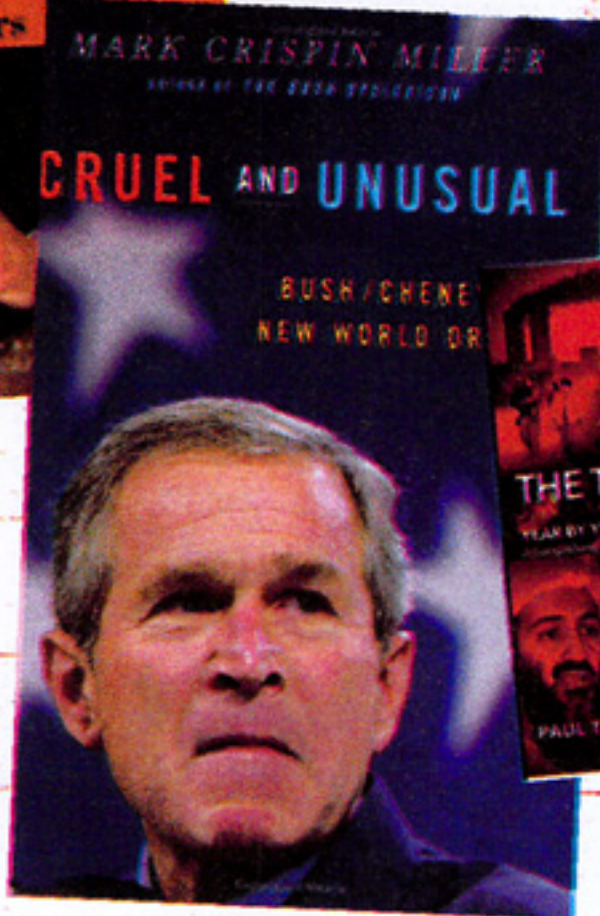


THANKS MICHAEL!
YOUR OVER THE TOP EFFORTS
TO DISCREDIT THE PRESIDENT
ONLY RALLIED OUR FORCES!





The Bush-Hater's Handbook A Guide to the Most Appalling Presidency of the Past 100 Years



With *Fahrenheit 9/11* in movie theaters, a new anti-Bush ad on the internet every week, and books with titles such as *The Bush-Hater's Handbook*, *The I Hate George W. Bush Reader*, and *The Lies of George W. Bush* flooding bookstores, the left was untiring in its attacks on Bush. But how many books were written about the left's vision for America? How many ads promoted our democratic values?

What is the essence of America? Is it the explorers Lewis and Clark striking out across a wild and unknown land? Or is it the same two men relying on Indian guides to get up the Missouri? One man rising to the presidency to sign the Civil Rights Act? Or tens of thousands of people putting their freedom on the line to win civil rights from their government?

It is all of this, of course. America's values exist in a tension, with rugged individualism and all-for-one liberty on one side, and collective effort and deep empathy on the other. Right now, though, only one side is being felt across the culturesphere.

Since last November's election – in which voters who chose "moral values" as their top issue overwhelmingly supported Bush – many have questioned the relevance of so-called progressive values. Conservatism is triumphal, and the values of George Bush and his cabinet fit the ideology perfectly. Bush's first-term cabinet was by far the wealthiest in US history, and its policies consistently rewarded the most powerful members of society. The rest of us were not so lucky. There's little wilderness left to conquer, but we continue to battle for our fortunes in the rugged terrain of extreme capitalism. If we fail, we are expected to view the failure as personal.

Some 36 million people now live below the poverty line in the United States, nearly 45 million lack even basic health coverage, and close to half the voting population didn't vote for Bush – the ground would appear to be fertile for a progressive-values revolution. Instead, throughout

the election and into the post-mortem, progressive leaders have stuck to a single strategy: attack the conservative agenda. Sneer at them. Repeat.

It failed. It failed because the bitterness played into the winner-takes-all conservative worldview of a clash of cultures, and it failed because progressive values remained invisible all along.

Why has it become so difficult in America to say that we have a collective responsibility to look out for our fellow human beings? That our government's policies should benefit all people? Not only those who share our skin color, our religious beliefs and our way of life; not just the wealthy or privileged; and not just our fellow Americans – but all people.

This is why progressives support the creation of a universal health care system. It's why we still believe in social welfare, despite its failings. It's why we cheered when San Francisco offered gay couples the chance to marry, why we support an increase in the minimum wage, and why we protest against shoe companies that use global sweatshops. It is why we want Guantánamo Bay shut down and an end to the occupation of Iraq.

Progressives value tolerance and compassion across boundaries of ethnicity, race, class, gender, religion, and nationality. And maybe the problem is this: that we believe we're the only ones left who do. That we have, in fact, already lost America.

Laura Fauth

**PEOPLE WHO SUPPORTED RALPH NADER IN 2000,
BUT TURNED THEIR BACKS ON HIM FOUR YEARS LATER:**

Tim Robbins
David Barsamian
Wes Jackson
Iris DeMent
Robert McChesney
Thomas Berry
Jim Hightower
Jackson Browne
Norman Solomon
Richard Falk
Ronnie Dugger
Sheldon Rampton
Studs Terkel

Jerry Mander

Noam Chomsky

Michelle Shocked

Sarah van Gelder

Phil Donahue

Eddie Vedder

Michael Moore

Peter Coyote

Barbara Ehrenreich

Vicki Robin

Wendell Berry

David Korten

Cornel West

Randy Hayes

Howard Zinn

Paul Hawken

Peter Montague

John Stauber

Ben Cohen

Susan Sarandon

Herman Daly

Rabbi Michael Lerner

Tom Tomorrow



JOHN KERRY TRIES TO CONVINCE MEMBERS OF THE GUN LOBBY THAT HE'S ONE OF THEM, OCTOBER 2004.

The only vote you ever waste is a vote for someone you don't believe in.
- Ralph Nader



Thanks John
For Not coming
up with any
Big new ideas

> It is time to turn our backs once and for all on the
> Democratic party and begin to build a new populist,
> new-labor based, human-values centered platform.
> - pdschuller



A TSUNAMI OF CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

In retrospect, it seems ridiculous. So much energy, so much hunger for real change in America and around the world – and all of it on the shoulders of the Kerry campaign for president. And now: nothing. Not a single creative idea came out of the Democratic Party adventure, not a single rallying point for the tough years to come.

No big surprise, really, because we liberal lefties have been running on close to empty for a long time now. An insidious cynicism has been creeping into our brains since the 1980s, turning us bit by bit into whiners, second guessers and abstract do-gooders. Now the stench of the perennial loser hangs over us like a disease.

We started 2005 with the devastation of a tsunami. Now I'm waiting for the second wave – a tsunami of creative destruction. Water swirling through the postmodern hall of mirrors . . . the old intelligencia washed out . . . the *Utne Reader*, *Mother Jones*, *The Nation*, *Air America* and the rest of the left-sprung media washed up. We've seen where the hippie-era pros and the lefty celebrities stand when the political battles come down to the crunch – they're the ones standing on the sidelines, cutting compromises for short-term gain at the expense of long-term change.

No use kidding ourselves . . . we're in World War IV now, a fight to the finish for the planet's diminishing oil, water and minerals. But the decisive battles won't be fought in the skies or on the streets or on the boundaries between nations; instead they're breaking out now in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, on television and in cyberspace. It's a no-holds-barred propaganda war of competing worldviews and conflicting visions, and to win we need some heavy intellectual weapons. I call them "metamemes" – ideas big enough to explode in the global imagination:

ECO

- Slow down fast money with the Tobin Tax. France, Canada and Belgium have already approved the concept of a tax on every currency trade; the EU may not be far behind. <attac.org>
- Throw out the GDP as a measure of progress and implement alternatives like the Genuine Progress Indicator, which measures quality of life. <redefiningprogress.org>

- Overthrow neoclassical economics and open the discipline to competing ideas. Download campus manifestos at <truecosteconomics.org>.
- Fight the political battle for a true-cost economy in which the price of every product includes its ecological costs. <adbusters.org>

PSYCHO

- Win the right for equal access to commercial airtime: corporate ads versus activist mindbombs. Legal actions are underway at <mediacarta.org>.
- Use anti-trust actions to crack the media megacorps and make way for a media democracy.
- Fight the human rights battle of our information age. Enshrine "The Right To Communicate" in the constitutions of all free nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights <mediacarta.org>.

CORPO

- Remove the limited liability and legal personhood that give corporations the same rights and freedoms as living, breathing human beings.
- Reassert democratic power with civil reviews of all corporate charters.
- Revoke the charters of corporations that betray the public trust. Three Strikes And You're Out!

POLITICO

- Launch a global public broadcaster, UNTV NEWS
- Pioneer a Global Internet Voting System and start holding plebiscites.
- Elect a virtual parliament for the United States of Planet Earth.
- Forget the traditional party split. Run a massive membership drive for the Green Party and start work on a crisp, new platform for a Second American Revolution in 2008.

ANARCHO

Make a promise to yourself: start living again . . . having fun . . . kicking ass . . .

Kalle Lasn



A MEDIEVAL MAP OF THE BRAIN DIVIDED INTO FOUR CELLS: COMMON SENSE, IMAGINATION, REASON AND MEMORY



ACK IN HIGH SCHOOL, I WAS MUCH impressed by an earnest physics teacher; rather more laid back than the rest of the faculty, he seemed at first more approachable than the rest, although after several attempts to speak with him, I realized that he actually had little interest in listening or trying to understand my questions, and was far more concerned to get back to his notebooks with their scribbled pages. A few weeks into the course, sitting on the table at the front of the classroom, he told us – wide eyed – that the apparent solidity and palpability of that table was entirely an illusion, for the table, in truth, was constituted almost entirely of empty space – vast yawning expanses of emptiness shot through with various infinitesimally small and feverishly whirling particles. I couldn't help but wonder why, then, the table still held him aloft, suspended three-and-a-half feet above the classroom floor. I stuck my hand in the air, swooshing it back and forth to catch his attention. "How come, then, you don't fall to the floor?"

"Because my body, too, is just a bunch of empty space whizzing with particles!" But this explained nothing whatsoever about why his apparent bulk still seemed to be supported by the wooden tabletop, or why, for instance, his ostensibly empty and illusory flesh did not just sink into and merge with the voidness of that table, or why he and the table did not merge with the emptiness of the floor. It explained only why I should no longer trust my senses, and should accept that the unseen dimension of subatomic particles – the esoteric world of electrons and gluons and mesons and quarks – was in fact a truer, realer world than that which my bodily senses disclosed. For several days, I wandered about in a state of intellectual bedazzlement, aware for the first time that everything I saw with my eyes was mere illusion, and excited that I, alone among the citizens surging past me along the sidewalk,

knew the hidden truth. Or at least that I knew someone who did.

Or who said that he did. Gradually, over the course of several weeks I discovered that a certain kind of provisional trust in the evidence of the senses was entirely necessary to accomplish the simplest tasks – like walking to school, or exploring the overgrown streambed behind the baseball field. But my exploration of that stream no longer held as much fascination for me as it did a few weeks earlier. If the visible world was in truth an illusory effect of realer events unfolding in the subatomic world, then I could no longer really learn anything of significance by gazing at the water-striders, or listening to the thrumming rhythm of the frogs. If I wished to know anything of what was truly real, I would have to apprentice myself to those scientists who were conversant with that hidden dimension – those whose access to high-powered instruments enabled them to peer behind the perceivable world and glimpse its source.

I began to read feverishly in the arcane world of subatomic physics, trying to glean whatever I could. Fascinating, at first . . . yet I soon grew despondent. I was spending all my extra time hunched over papers that I'd copied from journals on the squeaking xerox machine on the back wall of the library, and my body was not happy about this. The prescription for my recently acquired eyeglasses got stronger, while my skin wondered what had become of the wind that used to rush along my face when I was cycling around the towns and narrow woodlands of suburban Long Island. No doubt the wind was still there, but I wasn't – I was nose-deep in my books, trying to decipher a language that had nothing, as far as I could tell, to do with the remembered sound of the stream gurgling along the rocks, or the glistening eye of a half-submerged frog. I really missed those frogs! So what if I couldn't yet gain access to the subatomic world with its ultimate truths: it dawned

upon me that it was not physics but biology I should be studying!

The following year, I gave myself to biology with a vengeance. This was the science for someone like me – a kid uncomfortable hanging out with other kids for too long, who much more enjoyed spending his time in the woods listening to the way the trees rub against each other, and staring up at the leafless branches jutting like weird hands into the sky. It was good to be back in the same world as the frogs and the water striders. It puzzled me at first that biology was taught entirely indoors, in a laboratory-like classroom – but I secured a desk location close to the window, and when during lectures my attention drifted out beyond those panes of glass, I felt less guilty about it than I did in my other classes. I mean, this was biology, right? – the study of life, and of living things? – and so I felt justified gazing at the underbelly of a beetle walking up the outside of the window, or a couple of barnswallows chasing one another, swerving and dipping in the suburban sky.

But then the teacher announced we'd be dissecting frogs the next week. "Where're these frogs gonna come from?" I demanded of the teacher after class. He told me that they were shipped over for the express purpose of being dissected.

"Are you sure they're not from around here?" I asked.

"Positive."

Alright. I headed out across the field as soon as the class was over, ducked under a few trees, and sat down by the stream. I wanted to consult the local frogs about this new situation. I sat there, I remember, for a long time, but none of the big-eyed critters turned up . . . until finally, near dusk, I heard first one frog, and then another joining in, and then slowly a few more. There wasn't enough light to locate them with my eyes. So I just sat there and started talking to them, asking if they thought it was okay to dissect some other frogs in class. Whenever I started talking they quieted down, and then after I stopped there'd be a long pause, as though they were maybe thinking about what to say, and then they'd start croaking again. I knew that they were not really replying to what I'd said, yet it had the rhythm of a conversation, and so I listened close to

their deep calls, and then cut in and tried to justify what I'd be doing in the laboratory next week, and they'd fall silent, once again, at the sound of my voice, and so we went back and forth for a while. I guess I came away feeling that, well, maybe it was okay to dissect some of their distant relatives, since it was all in the name of learning the truth about the world.

The following semester, however, biology class began to focus upon the molecular basis of inheritance. It was only then that I learned that the behaviour of other animals is basically "programmed in their genes."

This piece of knowledge, as it sank in, reverberated through my own organism, transforming my experience of the animate world around me; it seemed to alter the very openness and attunement of my senses. My ears, for instance, became increasingly oblivious to the many non-human voices sounding from the trees and hedges in the backyard. The songs of the thrushes, and of the cardinals and blackbirds and other wingeds that had previously held me rapt with fascination began to fade from my awareness. My ears, that is, were no longer grabbed by their songs and cries. My hearing could not so readily focus upon whatever was being said by those birds precisely because those birds were no longer saying anything. In tandem with my biology text, I had defined away all of the meaning; these were no longer the earnest cries of creatures actively expressing themselves, actively making meaning in the present moment for one another. All these whistles and whirring calls were just automatic sounds, "programmed," as it were. And because I had defined away all the active openness and creativity in those voices, because there was no longer anything actively being said by those birds, my ears found little purchase in those sounds, found little to draw their participation, no enigmatic openness, or otherness, to compel their listening. And so the songs and calls faded into the background of a life increasingly focused on exclusively human concerns.

No longer enveloped by a many-voiced world as alive and weirdly mysterious as my own sentient self, my animal senses began to shut down. My eyes were no longer dazzled by the myriad insects creeping in



FIVE OF IVAN PAVLOV'S DOGS IN THE COURSE OF AN EXPERIMENT ON THEIR DIGESTIVE SYSTEMS

the tall grass near the train tracks, or by the high-stepping poise of the heron at the town marsh, and my ears gradually became deaf to all that did not speak in words. It seemed as though my skin itself became less porous, less permeable to the manifold life that surrounds, as my conscious self steadily withdrew from its participation with sensuous nature and began to live, more and more, in a clutch of abstractions.

After all, the real truth of things was hidden entirely behind the scenes – whether in the super-small world of electrons, neutrons and quarks, or in the ultra-distant world of the “Big Bang,” whether tucked inside our

brains (in that tiny dimension of neurons and neuronal synapses that ostensibly causes all our experience), or hidden within the nucleus of our cells (in

the molecular realm of the nucleotide sequences that presumably determine all our curious behaviors). The world accessible to my unaided senses – the visible, fragrant world of soil and spiders and the downpouring rain – came to seem a secondary dimension, an illusory field of appearances waiting to be penetrated, and dissipated, by the human mind. The earthly cosmos revealed by my animal senses was not really fundamental, and hence not all that important. No wonder that so few educated people seemed outraged by the rapid destruction of forests and wetlands, or the accelerating extinctions of other species. Material nature was a derivative reality – a realm useful for its extractable resources, and as a dumpsite for the toxic byproducts of human progress, but not worth worrying about, really, since we could soon replicate whatever we wished of this realm with our virtual technologies, since we’d soon be able to engineer the rest of nature, using gene splicing and nanotechnology, to better suit our needs and desires.

Few of us realized that all these technological dreams – like all those subatomic, genomic, and neurobiological dimensions hidden behind the appearances – were still secretly rooted in the world

All rationalism tends to minimize the value and the importance of life, and to decrease the sum total of human happiness.

- Howard Phillips Lovecraft

of our direct sensorial experience, and hence were still dependent upon our everyday encounters with the Earth around us. We did not suspect that our immediate, bodily awareness of the winds and the waters and the loamy soil underfoot provided the necessary ground for all those abstractions, the sole guarantee of their coherence.

It is only now, as we find our lives disrupted by the steady warming of the atmosphere, as we watch wetlands disappear and forests die off and realize that our own children will not be exempt from the violence that our onrushing “progress” has inflicted upon the breathing Earth, only now do we

notice that all our technological utopias and our dreams of machine-mediated immortality may fire our minds but they cannot feed our bodies. Indeed,

most of this era’s transcendent technological visions remain motivated by a fright of the body and its myriad susceptibilities, by a fear of our carnal embedment in a wild Earth ultimately beyond our control – our terror of the very world that offers us abundant sustenance at every moment. To notice this abundance – to awaken to the steady gift of this sustenance – entails that we offer ourselves in return, that we accept the difficult mystery of our own carnal mortality, accepting that we are bodily creatures that must die in order for other lives to flourish. But it is this that we cannot bear. We are too frightened of shadows. We cannot abide our vulnerability, our utter dependence upon a world that can, and will, eat us. Vast in its analytic and inventive power, contemporary humankind is crippled by a fear of its own animality, and of the animate Earth that sustains us.

Cultural ecologist and sleight-of-hand magician David Abram is the author of The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World. He recently founded the “Alliance for Wild Ethics” (AWE) in his home terrain of New Mexico.



RECONSTRUCTION OF MIDDLE-AGED NEANDERTHAL MAN

Oh well. At least we could reassure ourselves that we were lords of our own measly corner of the universe. Until centuries later, when Charles Darwin let it slip that humans might have descended from apes. He furthermore suggested that all animals originated from one common ancestor, and once again, the human sense of self-importance was sent reeling. So much for our assumed divine provenance at the hand of the Almighty. Now we were merely one branch on a vast evolutionary tree that did not assign rank or status. The product of blind chance.





CONFIGURATION OF THE ARTERIES OF THE HEAD AND BRAIN

All right, but certainly the human animal could still claim dominion over his or her own will? Not so, said Sigmund Freud, who declared the human self to be no more autonomous than a leaf blown about by the wind. People are aware of only a fraction of what drives their personalities, said Freud – the rest is repressed and imperceptible. Humanity was thrust into an existential nightmare – now we had no rational control over our own lives. The irony is: Freud identified the human ego, only to crush it with his theory of the unconscious.





DEPICTION OF ROBO SAPIENS; THE ULTIMATE UNION OF HUMAN AND MACHINE

Today, cyborg technology, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering represent the next stage in humanity's dwindling significance. Science will deliver the final knock-out punch, and what is the likelihood we'll muster the will to fight back? Why would we, for that matter? Aren't we merely the products of chance and coincidence, adrift in a generic corner of the universe, lacking conscious control over our very destiny – such as it is? Indeed, perhaps our destiny is this.



SCIENCE FOR SALE

Here are two miraculous stories. In one, a woman steps into nearly empty space but does not fall. With each step, the soles of her feet press down on billions of infinitesimally small strings. As the strings vibrate they take on the properties of different subatomic particles, which coalesce into atoms, which form molecules, which form a beige carpet.

In the second story, a man strides across the sea without getting wet.

Which of these tales is more incredible? A woman walking across her living room floor, as described by physicists' string theory; or Jesus walking on water, as described in Matthew 14?

Scientists ask us to believe things that are bizarre, conceptually difficult, and often counter-intuitive. They say that a man who spent 10 years traveling at near light speed would return to Earth and be younger than his twin brother. They point to a duck swimming on a

pond and the old man tossing it bread crumbs, and say that these two creatures differ due to the progressive accumulation of molecular accidents.

Let's face it: these stories are as fantastical as any told by priests and gurus. Yet many people, including the most skeptical among us, believe them.

Why? It's not like science's description of the world is particularly reassuring – it would be more comforting to think that good behavior and a few coins dropped into alms bowls could shield us from earthquakes, cancer and insanity. No, we believe in scientific explanations of the world because we *trust* scientists and their methods. But in the last 25 years, academic scientists have auctioned away their credibility.

The turning point came in 1980 when Ronald Reagan signed into law the Patent and Trademark Amendments (Bayh-Dole) Act, which made it possible for universities to reap profits from government-funded discoveries. Businesses saw that they could shift some research cost onto taxpayers, and they found scientists willing to trade academic independence for fat research grants. All the players seemed to benefit.

But Sheldon Krinsky, a professor at Tufts

The silence and indifference of scientists have enabled their paymasters to undermine the integrity of science with impunity. By communicating and organising themselves, scientists must now wrest back the initiative and protect the freedom and integrity of science itself.

John Cornwell

University School of Medicine and author of *Science in the Private Interest*, argues that the new relationship between academic science and industry has ruptured the "the social system of science and its relationship to public trust." According to Krinsky, the clearest example of this betrayal was provided by multi-state litigation against tobacco companies. Court documents showed how the tobacco industry created quasi-scientific front organizations, secretly funded speakers at conferences held by the World Health Organization, and gave gifts to academics at prestigious universities when they critiqued reports that linked smoking and health risks.

Krinsky also writes of the case of Nancy Olivieri, a professor of pediatric medicine at the University of Toronto who discovered that a new drug she was studying was harmful to her patients. But her funder and the maker of the drug – the pharmaceutical

company Apotex – forbade her to go public or warn her patients. And the university, expecting a \$20 million donation from Apotex, fired Olivieri rather than

supporting her academic freedom. (In 2001 Olivieri was vindicated by a public inquiry.)

The pharmaceutical industry's stranglehold on medical science is so pervasive that Richard Horton, editor of the prestigious journal *The Lancet*, now argues that medical journals should be treated as "information-laundering operations for the pharmaceutical industry" and "obstacle[s] to scientific truth-telling." His sobering conclusion to a recent essay in the *New York Review of Books* is that "any claim that the science and practice of medicine are disinterested is utterly groundless."

Big Pharma and Big Tobacco aren't the only industries to cloak themselves in the credibility of academic science: the list includes food and agriculture companies, chemical manufacturers, the forestry and fishing sectors, and oil and gas producers.

Ultimately, corporate-funded research changes how we see the world around us. Take the issue of climate change. There is a clear scientific consensus behind the theory that carbon dioxide produced by human

beings is causing global warming and increasingly erratic weather patterns. But a minority of scientists – whose voices are amplified by funding from the energy sector – argue that we are simply experiencing regular atmospheric fluctuations. As you sweat through a particularly hot summer, or watch a series of hurricanes lash Florida, which version of the world do you live in?

Unless the scientific community finds a way to erect barriers against corporate encroachment on science, the public will become increasingly suspicious

of scientists' stories and their motives. We won't ignore scientists, but we will treat them like movie critics – we will listen to them because we like their opinions, because their views are distributed by our favorite newspapers, or because they have the best marketing team. And if we find evolution too distressing, or string theory too weird, or global warming an inconvenient damper on our oil-dependent extravagances, then we can ignore these theories and look for scientists with more comforting stories for sale.

Chris Tenove

CHEMICAL COCKTAIL

From Prozac to perfumes, pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) are discharged down household drains in agrochemical-comparable quantities. Often their ingredients survive sewage treatment and enter our streams and rivers, and sometimes they return through our faucets. What will this largely unregulated cocktail of dimly understood compounds do to our environment? What will it do to us? Nobody knows, but a growing number of scientists demand more research and more precaution, warning that the effects could be gradual rather than acute, mistaken as 'natural' until it's too late.

The search for discharged PPCPs started only recently, triggered by a United States Geological Survey study and a 1999 article co-authored by EPA chemist Christian Daughton. "Scientists looked at the same small select group of pollutants for decades," explains Daughton. "Anything that humans use has the potential to be a pollutant."

The USGS study, released in 2002, found PPCPs – and many other previously unacknowledged pollutants – from sea to shining sea. Eighty percent of 139 urban waterways in 30 states were contaminated; of 95 targeted compounds, they found 82, with as many as 38 occurring

in a single stream. The findings were sobering. Detecting individual compounds at low concentrations is a laborious and time-consuming task, often requiring scientists to develop new methods of analysis. In a sense, finding PPCPs is less an issue of their presence than our ability to measure them.

"There are 10,000 synthetic organic compounds that we use in our daily lives and industry," says USGS scientist Michael Meyer, "and we're just looking at a small fraction of them."

While little is known about PPCP presence, their actual effects are understood even less.

Some PPCPs, including birth control pills and certain soaps, are endocrine disruptors, which can impair hormonal and reproductive processes. Antidepressants like Prozac can wreak reproductive havoc in fish and crustaceans, as can high blood pressure drugs. Musks used in perfume are highly toxic, and anti-epileptic drugs – which have been found in drinking water – can trigger cell death in developing human brains. How such compounds work in combination is anyone's guess.

But while these biological possibilities are recognized, scientists have yet to identify the effects of PPCPs on aquatic ecosystems and

human beings. Only in the last two years, says Daughton, has research on effects been published, and even that is skimpy. Such measurements are especially difficult. Impacts are likely to be subtle – and often we don't know what to look for.

"Very few chemical stressors have just one effect. They have effects on all sorts of pathways in organisms, because pathways are all interconnected," says Daughton. "That's why it's almost impossible to predict what types of effects you might find."

Current US regulations on PPCPs are inadequate. They emphasize acute toxicity, rather than the low but pervasive concentrations found in sewer discharge. They also overlook regional variations in concentration – some compounds may be diffuse on average, but intense in particular locales. In coming years, more regulation may be suggested, but both the lobbying power of chemical manufacturers and the limitations of our monitoring capabilities make that a distant possibility.

"It's amazing how little scientists know," says Daughton. "That's the takeaway lesson."

Brandon Keim is a freelance writer and former editor of Genewatch.



As a lawyer, I have to present arguments in court that don't always match up to what's really important to people. Law books don't address the lingering terror of domestic violence, and a brief concerning the destruction of wild places won't mention how the harmony and joy in people's lives is being replaced with grief and emptiness. A legal argument along those lines would cost me my credibility.

THE CRIMINAL CODE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING about the shock of assault. The Divorce Act doesn't mention loneliness or regret. In the case of the environment, the law says nothing about the pain of loss or the effects of loss on well-being.

There's an inhumanity to the way laws are worded. Although created to address human concerns, the law's penchant for emotional detachment often destroys the very qualities that give an issue urgency. It's one thing to say that a road should not be built through a wetland because it might disturb the critical habitat of a federally listed endangered species. It's quite another to say that the road shouldn't be built because it will destroy a beautiful place. The first argument is legally defensible; the second one generally is not. If there's an endangered species living in the wetland, and if the species in question is legally recognized by the government as being under threat, then it's possible to at least delay or – in a best case scenario – halt the construction. But if there's no "hook" present, no threatened species or vulnerable aquifer, it's all but impossible to halt development.

As a lawyer, I'm constantly having to fashion arguments that don't correspond to what I know is of genuine importance. In environmental law, legal arguments tend to focus on a single species or land issue, because that's how the game is played. Yet people working to preserve natural spaces rarely take such a narrow view. Most believe that wild areas should be saved because they are valuable in themselves, but a subjective accounting is not what's important. If it can't be objectified and quantified, then it cannot make contact with the law, and is therefore rendered irrelevant.

There's a logic to the evolution of environmental law. As we've come to realize that wiping species off the Earth is a dangerous game, we've gradually introduced laws to protect them. Laws have also

sprung up in accordance with the realization that we depend on aquifers and clean water supplies for our own survival. Greenbelts have been created to prevent the loss of land we grow our food on. But, again, these are objective standards driven by practical, human-centered concerns. The subjective element of nature, which is itself in danger of extinction, has at least as great a value, and applies to a much bigger part of our world.

Sometimes I imagine writing a legal brief that documents how, if a wild place is taken away, there will be less joy in people's lives, replaced by more grief and loneliness. It's frustrating to think such a fundamental argument would fall flat on its face. Most of the reasons – the really crucial reasons – people have for wanting to protect the environment are intangible. Wetlands and forests have an imaginative and emotional pull on us: they make us aware of our kinship with the wild world and trigger feelings of wonder and gratitude that are otherwise inaccessible. But the law tends to focus on static particulars – a given road, a specific plant. The protection scheme we've devised simply doesn't correspond to the way we experience the world.

Everyone knows that the law is a blunt instrument, ill-fit to address the subtleties of human experience. But it will certainly never accord protection to something upon which we ourselves don't place enough value. The law will only begin to recognize the emotional and imaginative importance of the natural world when we start to take it seriously ourselves. Maybe we need to start drawing new and clear "objective" links, such as that between pollution and asthma. Perhaps the link between the disappearance of nature and the rise of violence and depression will one day be drawn and appreciated with as much clarity. Only then we will begin to create wiser laws.

Marcia Bucyk



As a doctor, I'm aware of the clichés surrounding my profession. The patients themselves can make it difficult to keep my own importance in perspective, seeking me out like ancient Greeks sought out the Oracle of Delphi – expecting divine wisdom, divine answers. You have a problem with your weight, with your mood, your breathing – you don't want to know why and you can't imagine having the power to do anything about it yourself. You simply want results and you want them now. These days I've been feeling more assembly-line worker than deity.

EVEN MODERN MEDICINE COULDN'T SAVE WILLIAM Michael Stevens. He died in his hospital bed last night around 5:15. The candy-striper came in at 5:25 with a tray of hospital food which would later be thrown away. The doctor thought to himself that it was probably rather painful, despite the large dose of morphine, but nobody called it a shame. People at that age are supposed to accept death gracefully, although that is not always the case. William accepted it like he accepted most things in his life. It did occur to him though, that with modern medicine progressing as it is, he probably would have lived a couple more years or even another decade if he had been born in the 21st instead of the 20th century. But that thought did little to comfort him – the morphine worked far better.

He wasn't incredibly old, but not incredibly young either. Several of the people he called friends had already passed away. Josh, his sophomore roommate from college, had died two years earlier of a heart attack, but Alan, whom William also met in his dorm that year, was still alive, but had moved to Washington and wouldn't be able to return for the funeral. His best friend until the 8th grade was named Johnny. He ran across the street chasing a basketball. He died instantly when the car hit him. Everybody said it was a shame.

Jennifer had also died, but William never knew. He had seen her several times around campus the first week of college and found out her name when she happened to be in his Psych 101 section. He had spent a minute or two every day passing in front of her in the nearly empty dining hall, waiting for her to look up and ask him to sit with her. He made it a habit to look at every page in the newspaper every morning – he always said it was important to know what was going on and he kept up the habit until the day he was taken to the hospital a week ago – so he had actually seen her obituary. But of course, he didn't recognize a picture of a woman he hadn't seen since college with a last name he never knew. He was actually thinking about her that day, but he never made that connection.

It was in the next class, Psych 102, that the grad

student running the section said that he did a good job on the paper and that he should really consider becoming a Psych major as he was good at it and it was a growing field and such. But four years later he was back to his old high school summer job, working at a copy store – the economy was slow that year, he said, and there was little on the job market for Psych majors.

William worked very hard and disliked the other employees who slacked off all the time and let all their friends get away with using the machines for free. He considered it a temporary job, but he was proud of his hard work, and although he never said it, he knew he was the best employee. Once they made him switch to the night shift and he hated changing his sleep schedule but he did it. After that, and the time he caught that kid trying to make a fake ID using the color copier, he was promoted to manager. It was becoming manager that made him realize he ought to be more respectable and he began to read the paper and have a cup of coffee – cream and a little sugar – every morning.

But of course he didn't read the paper last week – news of the nation tends to be difficult to acquire in a hospital and he didn't want to bother anyone – so he didn't see the headline in the health and living section. Gene For Cancer Discovered: New Cure Not Far Off. The headline was not entirely incorrect, but even if the journalist had actually understood the meaning of the recent research, this would not have comforted William. But he still thought, briefly and almost bitterly, that with modern medicine progressing as it is, in just a couple of decades, people with an illness such as his would be living years longer, and might not be dying of it at all. He was bitter because it didn't seem right. It just didn't seem right to him that his very life should be decided by something as random as the year he was born. But, of course, he was dying, and he could no longer afford to wait for that to change.

Michael Metzger is a graduate student in the Molecular and Cellular Biology Program at the University of Washington.



As an economist, I had played the numbers game for two decades. Then I went on a three-month international trip on behalf of the World Bank. That's when I saw first-hand what these numbers really mean. Numbers have great power, including the power of deception. From high above, I had all the answers. On the ground, face-to-face with real people, I had none.



COMING THIS FALL TO FINE MEN'S STORES

Maybe the people at Rainforest named their product after a disappearing commodity in order to increase its value. After all, economists have shown us that the scarcer an item is, the higher a price it will fetch. What economists cannot tell us, however, is how to measure progress. They can assign a dollar value to the timber produced by the rainforest, but have little to say about soil erosion, the loss of animal habitat, and vanishing old-growth forests. They call these things 'externalities' but have not figured out how to incorporate them into their "science."

A well-being manifesto for a flourishing society
neweconomics.org

Sustainability within a generation
davidsuzuki.org

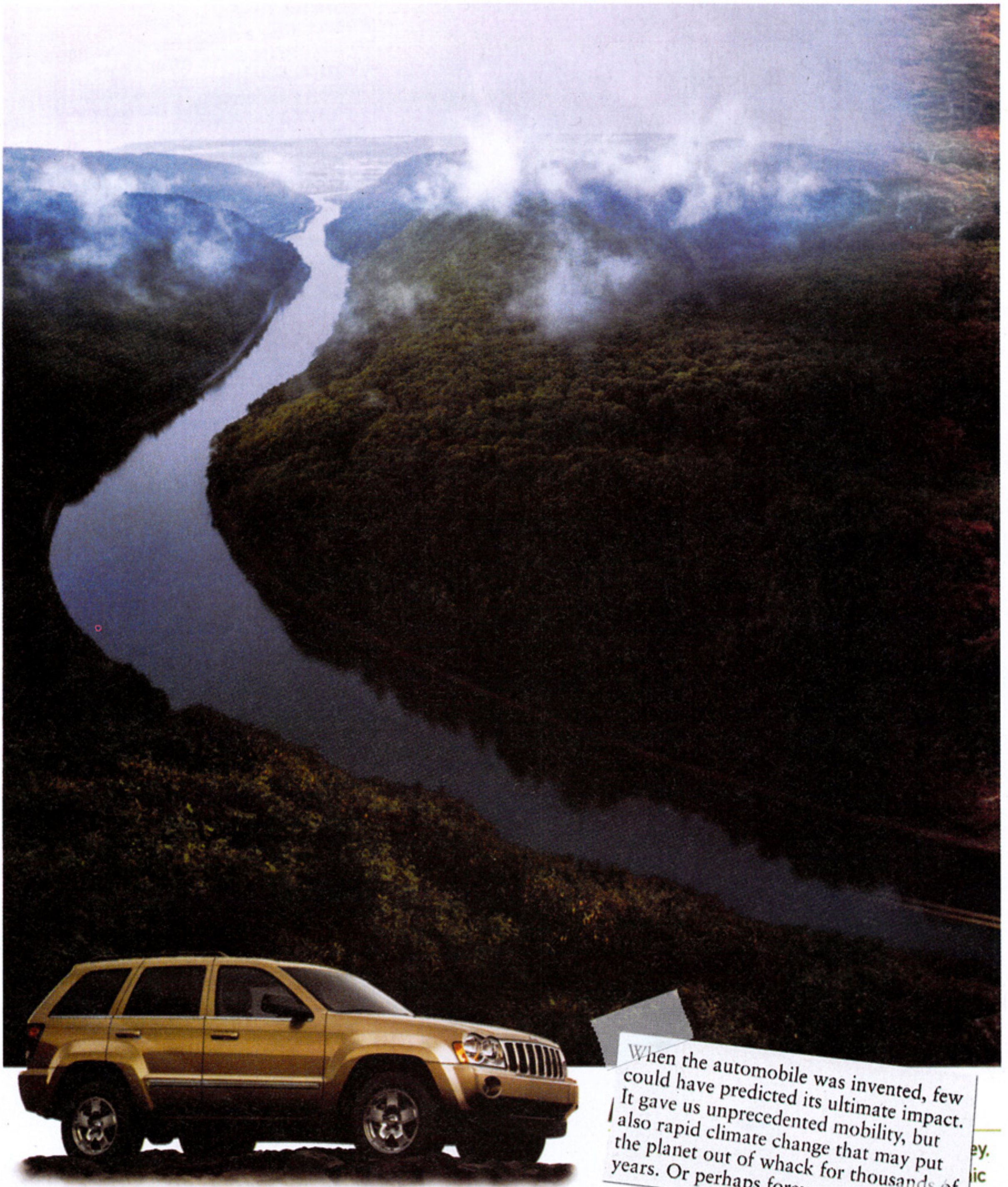
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When the automobile was invented, few could have predicted its ultimate impact. It gave us unprecedented mobility, but also rapid climate change that may put the planet out of whack for thousands of years. Or perhaps forever.



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Global Warming a Violation of Human Rights, Say Inuit

Through no fault or doing of their own, native communities like the Inuit continue to suffer the excesses of the industrialized world. The Arctic, say Inuit leaders, is the canary in the global coal mine - already showing obvious signs of environmental trauma in the form of rising temperatures and subsequently altered habitat. As a result, for example, melting unstable ice has negatively impacted the traditional seal hunt. At a UN-sponsored conference on climate change last December, Inuit delegates announced they would seek a ruling from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in response to the continued degradation of their land. Such a ruling would affirm that the United States, in its heedless contribution to global warming, threatens their very existence as a people and a culture. This could well provide the foundation for an eventual lawsuit, according to legal experts.

Several industrialized countries have concluded in recent reports and studies that warming linked to heat-trapping smokestack and tailpipe emissions

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PRECAUTION

CAROLYN RAFFENSBERGER BELIEVES IN SEX. THAT'S what she'll say if you ask the executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network (www.sehn.org) about the rising phenomenon of biotechnology. "We passed a policy on it in the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society," she explains. "It said one thing: We believe in sex. Because essentially what you're doing with biotech is taking away the right to sex from plants and animals. It's a way of saying yes to something," she emphasizes, "The beauty of the precautionary principle is that now we have ways to say 'yes'."

This affirmative purview may be part of the reason the precautionary principle has gained such rapid currency in the past decade. The other half of that reason can only be the efforts of Raffensperger herself, one of its most influential proponents. It's a concept of deceptive simplicity, the kernel of which can be found in timeless folk-adages like: "Look before you leap," or "a stitch in time saves nine." Raffensperger describes it as "an idea that turns our culture's practice of science on its head. When you have scientific uncertainty and the likelihood of harm, you take preventative or precautionary action. There's nothing more to it."

Such a common-sensical formulation, you'd think, would set off little more than a round of "duhs" among policy-makers. Yet the fatal negligence of companies like Dow Chemical or Merck (makers of Vioxx), affirms that common sense is hardly the fuel driving the free market economy.

"When I started environmental work in the early 80s," Raffensperger recalls, "it looked like things were getting better. Things like global climate change still seemed reversible and hypothetical. And now they don't. Now they seem inevitable and intractable."

This has been cause for bitterness among activists and Raffensperger herself claims to have long been exhausted by outrage, the feeling of constantly "saying 'no'." Lately, however, she's witnessed an even more chilling attitude. Following the most recent American election, Raffensperger found herself bumping up against outright nihilism.

"Environmentalists thought there may be some hope if John Kerry was elected president," she explains. "And then he wasn't. So the question they're now asking me is pretty awful: 'Why shouldn't we accelerate the destruction of the planet?'"

If there is nothing we can do and we're complicit in its destruction, why not just help the planet get rid of us?"

Although alarmed by such depths of despair, Raffensperger is too much of a realist to deny there's good reason for it. The fatal degradation of the planet is in evidence "everywhere you turn."

"The increase in autism in the US – 210 percent over a decade in California; the acidification of the oceans – it's so acidic that shells can't form on calciferous sea life; the disappearance of 2700 pelicans in North Dakota; the complete reproductive failure of the birds in the Orkney Islands – it just goes on and on."

Yet Raffensperger insists the precautionary principle is what allows us that first crucial backward-step from the edge of the abyss. Foremost, "it calls for action. It means not just accepting somebody's stupid destructive technology as the end-all and be-all. We begin inventing new technology, new tools. That whole list of things that happened in the 80s – Bhopal, Chernobyl – all led to some incredible innovations," she stresses. "The 90s saw this array of new ideas – green chemistry, green engineering. Whole new approaches to energy generation."

"We may have the right to take our own lives," Raffensperger responds to despairing activists, "but we don't have a right to take those of the whales and dolphins, to take the planet and other species down with us. Therefore we have no choice but to live authentically."

Part of living authentically takes place on an individual level – "knowing the small gesture matters," but just as important is what people can do collectively. "We start by creating a public research agenda which asks: What is the technology we want? If we begin designing the parameters up front, we're much less likely to need the precautionary principle as a regulatory device. How do we take technology back from the rape-and-pillage mind set? Can we imagine a technology that would be interactive with nature in a way that is beneficial?"

The precautionary principle, says Raffensperger "is the best portal into a new way of approaching technology and helping us to set goals."

"We do it by living authentically, we do it by resisting evil, we do it by bearing witness, we do it by saying, 'Yes'."

Lynn Coady

BIOMIMICRY

CENTRAL TO BIOMIMICRY IS THE IDEA that nature, through 3.5 billion years of experimentation, has already solved many of the problems with which humanity continues to struggle. This isn't a new concept. Alexander Graham Bell mimicked the structure of the human ear when he invented the telephone. Velcro came about in 1948 after Swiss inventor, George de Mestral, struggled to pull burrs out of his dog's fur after a walk in the woods.

But modern biomimicry promises more than mere convenience and elegant design; it could mean a sustainable future. While the manufacture of Kevlar – one of our strongest materials – creates a host of toxic by-products, the drag-line silk a spider produces without chemicals or heat is waterproof, biodegradable, tougher and more elastic.

Australian engineer Jay Harman noticed how kelp is able to weather rough seas and strong currents, winding itself into a unique spiral and thereby following the path of least resistance. Inspired, Harman designed a more efficient screw based on the vortex spiral of water in motion.

Scientists are also rethinking the need for cleaning detergents. At least one brand of exterior paint has resulted from a phenomenon known as the Lotus Effect. The white lotus grows above muddy swamps, with tiny wax-coated bumps covering its surface. When rain falls, the water beads on the mounds and rolls off, collecting dust and dirt: a self-cleaning exterior.

Ultimately, biomimicry's own by-product – conservationism – could have the most positive impact of all.

Peter Ndekezi

THE MYSTERY OF SCIENCE

JOHN TODD'S WORK IS SOMETHING of a mystery, even to himself. He and his colleagues build mini-ecosystems that turn sewage into irrigation water, restore dying lakes and streams, filter polluted canals, and process sludge. They call them living machines. They can assemble them. They're just not entirely sure how they work.

Todd is part of a growing legion of scientists who are swinging open the doors of laboratories and pulling up from microscopes to proudly state, "I don't know." They do have some understanding of how an individual creature processes a toxin and which ones are better suited to certain conditions. But ultimately, all they can do is combine them, step back, and watch the magic: the intricate cooperation between snails, grasses and microbes that process the products of our factories, toilets and chemical plants better than we can.

Rebel scientists like Todd recognize the futility in trying to manage, direct or predict nature. They see that, for all our supposed wisdom, we have failed to accomplish the most basic tasks. We cannot live – feed, house or transport ourselves – without destroying our own habitat.

The more closely we study our subject, from molecular biology to genetics, to nanotechnology, the further away we are from understanding the system. But some brave academics are learning to discard the hubris of their disciplines, challenging the claims that all life can be partitioned into quantifiable parts. Rather than trying to disassemble the mysteries of the natural world, they are learning to put them back together, to see the big picture and find their place in the image.

Todd has explained "If we

could be half as intelligent as a forest. . . if we could understand how it organizes itself as wood – i.e., how it uses energy and materials and nutrients and relationships – we could reduce the negative human footprint on this planet by 90 percent."

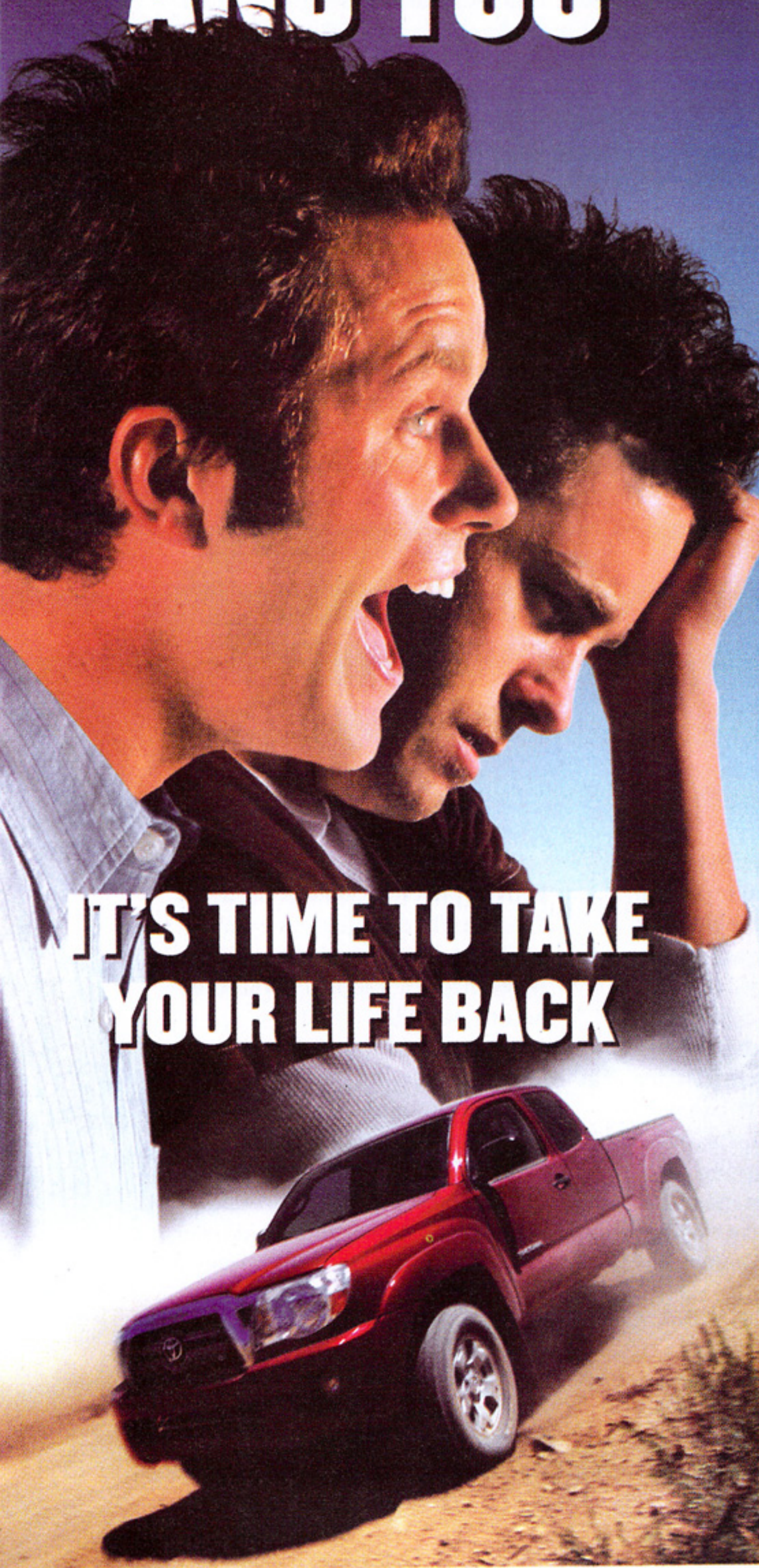
Clearly, it's time to send scientists back to school.

Or, as life sciences writer Janine Benyus puts it, scientists need "to literally change their eyes and their hearts, [to] change the ways they see and feel about the natural world."

What would this change look like? It is "a deepening relationship with an organism," says Benyus. A state in which, "You don't just learn about, you learn from. Out of this process respect and awe ensues. Suddenly you are in a different situation, you are a student. Nature is a wellspring of genius."

Olive Dempsey

ADRENALITIS AND YOU



**IT'S TIME TO TAKE
YOUR LIFE BACK**

Picture a thirteen-year-old boy sitting in the living room of his family home doing his math assignment while wearing his Walkman headphones or watching MTV. He enjoys the liberties hard won over centuries by the alliance of philosophic genius and political heroism, consecrated by the blood of martyrs; he is provided with comfort and leisure by the most productive economy ever known to mankind; science has penetrated the secrets of nature in order to provide him with the marvelous, lifelike electronic sound and image reproduction he is enjoying. And in what does progress culminate? A pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms; whose feelings are made articulate in hymns to the joys of onanism or the killing of parents; whose ambition is to win fame and wealth in imitating the drag-queen who makes the music. In short, life is made into a nonstop, commercially prepackaged masturbational

fantasy. This description may seem exaggerated, but only because some would prefer to regard it as such.

- Alan Bloom,
Closing of the American Mind

"Veal meat, that's what we've become, especially the young 'uns." That's what anyone raised by the corporations, fed their version of "fun," "excitement," and above all "hip," becomes – pale, docile, and unmuscled, a creature finely attuned to the aesthetics of its own flesh but incapable of standing on its own legs. Your movement beyond the TV box may be restricted, your opportunity to frolic in uncommercialized fields may be nil, but it's OK, being veal: all your life, the corporate stock feeders bring you sugar food and hormone entertainment. Raised to consume, kept soft in head and belly – the modern spirit is slaughtered early.

- Leslie Savan,
The Village Voice

SELF QUIZ

Think you may be suffering from Adrenalitis? Try this self quiz to determine if you have symptoms of this devastating affliction.

Do you suffer from recurring nightmares in which you find two squirrels on a treadmill in place of your vehicle's engine?

☐ Yes ☐ No

When friends ask you to help them move do you lie in fear of damaging your truck bed with an excuse like "Sorry, I have a doctor's appointment to see about a rash"?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does looking at a dented, scratched or rusted pickup bed provoke feelings of anger, terror or grief?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you wake up screaming from images of cherished belongings falling out of pickup truck beds?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you checked "yes" to one or more of the questions above, it's time you talk to your Toyota dealer about Adrenalitis and how the Tacoma can help.



Thinking of getting a tattoo? If you're willing to forego a bit of creative control, you can actually be paid for the privilege. Vancouver advertising agency TatAD claims to have lined up several hundred people eager to have permanent ads emblazoned on their skin in exchange for cash. Now it's enlisting clients from tobacco hucksters to dot coms who want to stamp their brands onto arms, hands, legs, ear lobes and other body parts.

A girl from Squamish, British Columbia got the ball rolling by offering her belly for the first ad. A fashion company paid a mere \$800 for the honor of inking its logo and website address on her skin. But that's just the start. The terms of the contract require the girl to talk about the logo and tell her friends and peers how much she likes the advertiser.

The contract is for two years, after which the human billboard has three options: undergo a series of expensive laser treatments to remove the advertisement, tattoo over the existing logo, or live with it. "It's very aggressive. But that's today's society," says CEO Mark Chadwick of his advertising model. Asked if TatAD will do foreheads, Chadwick replies, "No, that would look goofy." As if a corporate logo elsewhere on your body looks great.

As Western culture continues to supersize, once-radical approaches to managing obesity continue to ease into the mainstream. Previously, stomach-reduction surgery was considered an extreme solution for anyone but the most dangerously obese adults. Today, the problem has reached such epidemic proportions that children as young as 12 are undergoing the procedure. According to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 15 percent of children aged 12 to 19 are overweight, and suffering a myriad of health problems as a result. Obese children can experience anything from high blood pressure and cholesterol to sleep apnea, shortness of breath and pre-diabetic symptoms. The risks of the surgery, however, are just as alarming – postoperative complications can

involve blood clots floating to the lungs or stomach juices leaking into the blood and causing infections. The possibility of death is estimated to be 1 in every 200 patients. Yet with the number of overweight teenagers having tripled in the past two decades, parents must choose between the devil they know – the serious health effects of childhood obesity – and the devil they don't. In desperation, many parents are opting for the uncharted territory of "banding," where a silicone band is wrapped around the stomach, or gastric bypass surgery, where a child's stomach is surgically reduced to the size of a golf ball. The effects of such procedures on growing children, and the possibility of their nutritional intake being limited as a result, raise a host of questions and conceivable future complications.



IT MIGHT BE THE HARDEST-HITTING COMMERCIAL-culture jam of the past year, and it comes from – wait for it – the American Christian right wing.

The message from the American Family Association is simple: if your advertising dollars support such TV "filth" as *South Park*, *Desperate Housewives*, or *Life As We Know It*, you're going to hear from the 200,000 subscribers to their One Million Dads and One Million Moms emailing lists.

And companies do buckle. While the AFA's claim to have affected the advertising buys of more than 30 companies is overstated – their "successes" include advertising contracts that have reached their scheduled ends – there's no doubt the group is logging some hits. "Thank you for contacting us regarding our television commercial airing in *Desperate Housewives*," writes Kohl's department stores in a letter posted on the AFA website. "Based on Kohl's program parameters, this program would

not be part of our television buy."

It's mental environmentalism – but from the narrowest point of view. Fundamentalist groups like the AFA and American Decency Association applauded when YUM! Brands (which owns Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Long John Silver and A&W restaurants) agreed to stop advertising on *Desperate Housewives*. Neither group, however, is critical of the sheer volume of YUM! Brands advertising, nor of the company's ads that target kids.

Still, the religious fundies put the question out there: where are the One Million Media Jammers? Where's the email network to demand real democratic change – like equal access to paid commercial airtime, an agreement against ads aimed at kids, and an advertiser boycott against media monopolies?

Am Johal

ANXIETY ABOUT PHYSICAL APPEARANCE HAS CREPT below the belt with the latest, fastest-growing trend in cosmetic surgery: the designer vagina. "I make things pretty," says Dr. David Matlock of the LA-based Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Center. Women arrive armed with porn magazines like *Swank* and *Hustler* and say, 'I want to look like that.' Matlock is booked solid for the next six months giving "sagging or fat labia majora a youthful look" with liposuction and fat transplants, and laser cutting "elongated" labia minora. He also performs vaginal tightening and "hymen repair – as if nothing ever happened." Most hymen surgery patients are from the Middle East but some are Americans looking "to give the experience of virginity to their husbands." Many patients – "doctors, lawyers, scientists, teachers" – have had other cosmetic surgeries. "This is a no-brainer for them: 'I want an overhaul!'" says Matlock. "I even had a nude dancer with a beautiful genital structure but an excess of skin like a raspberry. I made her labia minora like a pencil."

Pencil-thin is the designer vagina look. While pre-op photos display a variety of shapes and sizes (few genitals fit the symmetrical mold), Sarah, a 21-year-old sociology and business student "felt uncomfortable and embarrassed" with her vagina's "flappy" look. "It brought down my confidence and made me not want any guy to see me naked." So last May, she trekked from Toronto to Dr. Gary Alter's LA clinic for labia reduction. "Now I don't have to hide anything. I feel totally free."

Sarah's explanation echoes views popularized by feminist writer Kathy Davis – that female cosmetic surgery recipients are liberated, empowered cultural agents. University of Washington philosophy professor Sara Goering wonders if augmented women are merely puppets of prescribed beauty ideals. "Good feminists don't want to undercut women's choices," says Goering. "(But) I think we need to look at the larger ethical implications." Goering is finishing up a confidential survey showing that all surgery recipients had low self-esteem post-op – and many wanted yet more surgeries. Yet they seemed untroubled by their lack of ability to articulate why they wanted the procedures in the first place.

Dr. Alter, who does labioplasties on girls as young as 14, says critics are merely threatened. "Like

someone with an older hairstyle who says, 'Don't change yours because I'll feel bad.'" Such glib comparisons are shocking considering the risk of death from liposuction, the most popular surgery, is up to 60 times higher than any other hospital procedure. These surgeries can also permanently damage healthy tissues.

Yet almost seven million women in the US had cosmetic surgery in 2003, an increase of 20 percent. "I see a parade of the same noses every day at my office on Sunset Plaza Drive," says Dr. Edna Gorbis, a body dysmorphic disorder specialist in LA. "Cosmetic surgery is an epidemic right now in America." Gorbis believes we've created a "fertile breeding ground" for increased augmentation through our rampant fetishization of youth, perfection and material objects. "We have no cultural values. We idolize celebrities, not the wisdom and experiences of our grandmothers."

Our culture's obsession with youthfulness has also invaded our ovaries. "Young eggs look brilliant and beautiful," one fertility director commented in *Elle* magazine. "Old eggs are dark and grainier." Some fertility clinics now target-market egg-freezing to career-driven women. The price tag is about \$15,000, and the necessary hormone injections can cause severe pain. The eggs must then be implanted by in-vitro fertilization (IVF), which has a one-third success rate for women 35 and under and drops another half by 40. Some fertility clinics, therefore, aggressively market to women in their 20s; one client banked her eggs as a 30th birthday present to herself. But IVF treatments have twice the risk of major birth defects, as well as greater risk for certain cancers, behavioral problems, cognitive deficits and sex chromosome abnormalities like underdeveloped genitals and adult infertility.

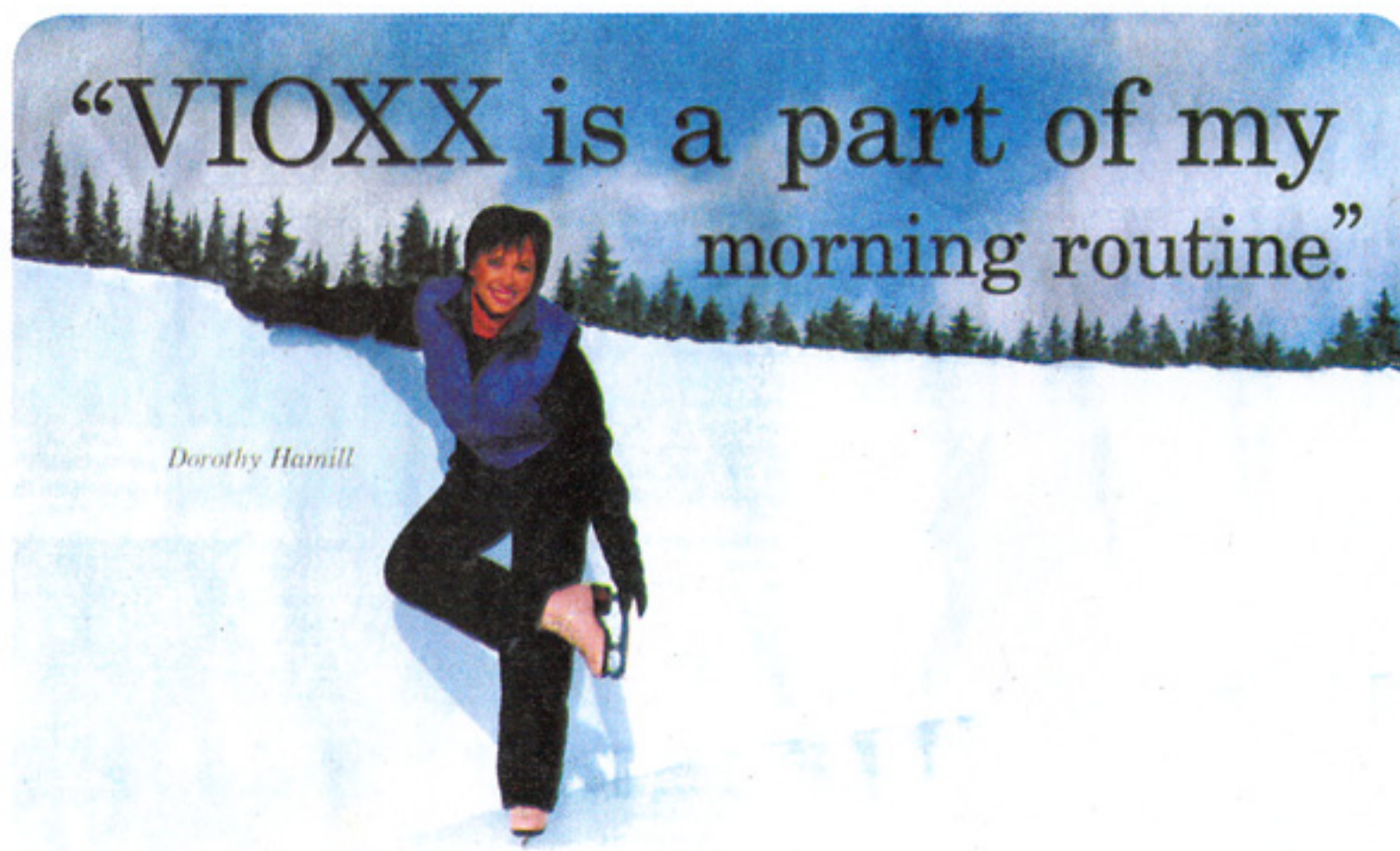
Meanwhile social reformers shout into the void: for daycare centers, anti-violence projects, improved reproductive health care for minorities and family planning in countries where women have fewer rights. We need to take a hard look at what freedom means as individuals and citizens. "Technology has gotten ahead of our ethics," says Goering. "If we keep upping the ante, the burden will shift to the individual who chooses not to modify. Then we're all really trapped."

Danielle Egan



New York Times Magazine, Dec. 26, 2004

DONNA KARAN
INTIMATES



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FOR EVERYDAY VICTORIES

For years, it was Big Tobacco that mined the culture for every desire – the urge to rebel, the hunger for cool – and sold it back to us as an addiction. Now Big Pharma is tapping in, labeling our pains and sorrows as “disease” and offering brand-name solutions. The problem: the rush to make us “better than well” is proving harmful to our health. In the past few months, warnings have been issued over big-name pills like Celebrex, Iressa and Strattera, and Vioxx has been pulled off the market. Each drug, of course, had been stickhandled past government watchdogs and heavily marketed to doctors and the public. Meanwhile, when was the last time the \$500-billion-per-year drug industry found a breakthrough cure for a lethal global illness like malaria or AIDS?

TV-B-Gone
Universal Remote Control

Zap every television in sight with this keychain-sized universal remote. TV-B-Gone works at the pub, at your neighbor's, at the airport ... any place that needs a break from the idiot box onslaught.

Price: \$15
www.tvbgone.com

The latest ad scheme aimed at the young-to-middle-aged male demographic is guaranteed to capture attention for up to a minute at a time. How? Urinal inserts that sell ads.

According to its website, Wizmark “is based on one unwritten rule of men’s etiquette; when using a urinal, never stare at the person next to you.”

The idea, galling as it may be, has some intriguing implications. Like, what does it mean to be pissed off by something you piss on?

Jim Doria

MY HAND IS STUCK INSIDE A VENDING MACHINE and there's not a soul around to help me. The anti-theft latch caught my arm and is now holding onto it like a Chinese finger trap. The more I struggle, the tighter it gets.

The personal-sized bag of Doritos I purchased hangs like a cobweb at the second tier from the bottom. They are of the Nacho Cheesier variety, which taste and cost exactly the same as the discontinued flavor, Nacho Cheese. I buy them because, although I prefer Cool Ranch, the majority of people in my sector favor Nacho Cheesier. I know this because they've told me.

"Hey next time, get the cheese-flavored ones, they're better."

Okay.

"And whatever happened to those brownies you made last Friday? You should start doing that again."

Alright.

"Oh, and yeah, the toilet's clogged up, and I think you were the last one to use it, so if you wouldn't mind . . ."

Sure.

No problem.

This has never happened to me before.

Usually, they fall from their place near the top all the way down to the catch-basin at the bottom. This time, though, a protruding Hershey's plain chocolate bar has knocked the bag between the two bottom layers where it now hovers just out of reach of my trapped hand.

I have a meeting I should be at now. I know I should be there now because I can see on the watch that is on the arm that is inside the vending machine that it is one o'clock. Everyone is already back to work after lunch.

I always leave my change in vending machines. Whenever people get back extra change, it gives them a feeling like they've beaten the system.

I share my personal-sized bag of Doritos with three other people: Donny, Marie, and Greg. I don't actually work with any of them. In fact, Donny and Marie's cubicles are not even on this floor. But they

come down to visit Greg during lunch, whose cubicle is adjacent to mine.

My arm hurts whenever I move. But I've shifted so that I am lying on the ground in a position which I pretend to myself is comfortable. The more I struggle, the tighter it gets.

Few people pick up after themselves here. There are paper coffee cups from the coffee machine, half-empty cans from the pop machine, crumpled brown paper lunch bags, and someone even left the refrigerator open.

I try and scoot into a slightly more comfortable position. Another pang rockets up my arm, and I feel like some brute has jujitsued me into a nasty joint-lock.

There is a poster in the break room with a masked criminal dropping a clock into a bag. There is a

poster next to that one with a cat dangling from a tree branch that says Hang in there!

The More I Struggle, The Tighter It Gets.

A mantra.

I remember stories about shipwrecked, lost, or otherwise stranded people and how sometimes their limbs get infected, bitten off, broken, or trapped under a tree trunk. Sometimes they have to amputate themselves with machetes or Swiss Army knives.

How awful that would be, to have no anesthesia, not even a bottle of liquor. How awful that would be, to be all alone like that, no one around you at all.

I have officially missed the meeting.

My arm is turning purple.

I am the only one who knows that I don't do any work. My position is peripheral, created by some upper-level management types out of touch with the inner workings of the company. But papers still pass through my hands, and in turn, I pass them on to others.

I am a human inbox.

If I can't rebel by being lazy, maybe I could send out something on the listserv.

I'd say, you know people, Greg is actually the one

who clogs up the toilet every day. He doesn't flush. And he doesn't wipe either.

And Donny is a small-time drug dealer. He pushes mostly marijuana and Ritalin, but sometimes gets his hands on Vicodin. He talks about it with Greg sometimes, who buys Ritalin from him.

I once bought an eighth from Donny.

Marie looks up pornography in her spare time. I can tell because she does not clean out her logs.

Marie likes Nacho Cheesier.

So does Donny.

And Greg.

The More I Struggle, The Tighter It Gets.

The reason I do things for other people is because I don't do anything for the company and I don't want anyone to know. I started baking special brownies with the pot Donny sold me. I delete Marie's logs because she's too dumb to cover her tracks. I unclog the toilets for Greg.

I buy Doritos for pricks.

Donny pretends to be funny. He thinks that people will like him more if he does or says funny things. He does not realize that Greg and Marie talk about him all the time behind his back. Donny pretends he does not know this, when in reality, he's an inch away from slitting his wrists.

Donny makes fun of other people. He considers this his speciality, pointing out the stupidity of others and wishing they were as smart as he is. He does not realize that everyone he makes fun of is really a psychological projection of himself. Donny makes up stories about his sector neighbors' revolting habits, when in reality, Donny is the biggest snot-eater I've ever met.

I watch him laugh. He knows how much people talk about him, and takes everyone's shit with a smile. With sweat and a smile. Donny is a human wastebasket.

Marie makes fun of him the most.

Marie pretends to be a feminist. She thinks that her friends will see her as more of an independent, intellectual woman if she talks about Betty Friedan. She does not realize that I know she visits lesbian bondage sites, that secretly, she wants to be controlled. Marie pretends to be outraged when Donny makes a sexist joke, when in reality, she reads

erotic fiction underscored by a common theme of extreme and vile degradation to women.

Marie talks about the position of women in contemporary society. She says that all housewives should aspire to be like her. She does not realize that she has no career. Marie talks about her disdain for our patriarchal society, when in reality, she can't even pronounce the word correctly.

I watch her listen. She just nods her head and never talks back. She gets hot. Marie is a human typewriter.

Greg wants her.

Greg pretends he's Buddhist. He thinks that Marie will like him more if he seems philosophically exotic. He does not realize that she is a lesbian and does not care. Greg pretends he doesn't get pissed off at his boss in order to create a façade of serenity, when in reality, Greg is as fucked up and angry as the next guy.

Greg talks about forgiveness. He says how wonderful it is and how much better the world would be if everyone were as forgiving as him. He does not realize that there is nothing in his life for him to forgive. Greg talks about meditation and altered planes of consciousness, when in reality, the only altered plane of consciousness he's attained resulted from an overdose of Ritalin.

I watch him type. He can do almost one hundred and twenty words per minute. Two words a second. Greg is a human copy machine.

I sit next to Greg.

I am a human inbox.

And this is the first time since I've begun working here that I exist.

At any other given moment, I am just a pair of floating hands.

Passing papers. Flushing toilets. Deleting pornography.

Buying Doritos.

Now my hand is stuck in a vending machine, and even if someone wanted a Hershey's plain chocolate bar, or a bag of Nacho Cheesier Doritos, they couldn't have it.

Mark Boyd is a 17-year-old self-styled sociologist/ writer struggling with the madness of human behavior.



The spectacle presents itself simultaneously as society itself, as a part of society, and as a means of unification.

The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images.

The spectacle cannot be understood as a mere visual deception produced by mass-media technologies.

It is not a mere decoration added to the real world. It is the very heart of this real society's unreality.

Spectators outside the courthouse in Redwood City, California, react to news that Scott Peterson will be executed by lethal injection.

THE MICHAEL JACKSON TRIAL. THOSE FOUR WORDS should dispel the faith of any who believe that something was learned from the Scott Peterson court case – that some germ of restraint has followed from America's year-long infatuation with a man who murdered his pregnant wife.

We have only begun to measure the mass psychology of the trial. Where even to begin? With the fact that the case generated its own long list of new celebrities? With Bill O'Reilly from Fox News saying, "We do Laci Peterson every 15 minutes and see the numbers go up"?

The Peterson coverage represents a problem deeper than a dumbed-down America. A tabloid culture has been emerging for decades, with its own news agenda and priorities, its own conflicts, heroes and villains. It's too late to sort out the chicken and the egg; the

plain fact is that a huge percentage of Americans is just waiting for the next morality tale. To those still outside the culture, it is impossible to understand; to those inside, it is one of the only remaining ways to make useful sense of the world.

The divide is every bit as deep as blue-states-versus-red or the urban-rural split. The parody version of tabloid culture is an army of zombie clones mesmerized by their TVs. Strangely, however, the guiding principle of this new faith is: avert your eyes. There is too much to see, too much to take in, too much that you are powerless to change. Better to look away – toward the breakup of Brad and Jennifer, the falling star of Ben Affleck, the dark heart of a pop star who lives in a place called Neverland.

James MacKinnon

The spectacle is the bad dream of a modern society in chains and ultimately expresses nothing more than its wish for sleep. The spectacle is the guardian of that sleep.

Everyone knows American war films are propaganda. Now we know why. In his recent book *Operation Hollywood: How the Pentagon Shapes and Censors the Movies*, David Robb reveals that for the past 50 years, the US armed forces have controlled their spit-shined Tinseltown image with the swagger of a drill sergeant. In exchange for military access, equipment and advice, film and TV producers will

do whatever it takes to pass muster, routinely rewriting scripts and prescreening their work for a Pentagon audience. Just one example: 2001's *Black Hawk Down*, shot using toys borrowed from the world's most powerful fighting machine. Glossing over some Fallujah-caliber atrocities by US forces, this jingoistic action flick spun a botched 1993 covert operation in Mogadishu, Somalia, into a yarn of aw-

shucks Yankee heroism. But the devil was in the details. One of the characters went on to become a rapist and child molester in real life, so director Ridley Scott got his orders from Washington: change the maggot's name. Robb argues that half a century of watching recruitment-officer fantasies unfold onscreen has left Americans more bellicose. He's bang-on.

The US Army believes the children are the future. And what better place to enlist them than the parking lots and corridors of American high schools? In 2001, the House of Representatives passed President George Bush's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which contains a craftily buried provision requiring schools to supply the military with all students' names, addresses and phone numbers. Not only that: glad-handing recruiters get the same access to these impressionable young people as postsecondary institutions and civilian employers do. Although students can opt out of surrendering their personal info, any school that doesn't pony up risks losing its federal funds. It's no coincidence that by this fall, the army aims to enlist 80,000 new soldiers for active duty, versus 77,000 in 2004 – and those bright-eyed volunteers have to come from somewhere. Who needs the draft when you've got NCLB?

In January, Discovery Communications – owner of TLC, Animal Planet and the Discovery Channel – launched the Military Channel, hitting army buffs with a barrage of combat-oriented programming that would make Donald Rumsfeld blink. As observers such as Rory O'Connor of MediaChannel note, it's yet another goosetstep in the inexorable retooling of the US media into a PR wing of the Pentagon. Keeping this beast fed day and night will require a whole new order of brown-nosing with military brass.

- The US Army and the video-game biz have a lot to gain from each other. In 1999, the Pentagon dropped \$45 million to float the Institute for Creative Technologies, a University of Southern California offshoot that produces cost-effective combat simulations. So far, ICT has spawned two jaw-grindingly realistic games now in use at military training camps: *Full Spectrum Command*, which lets players lead

an infantry squad of 120 in an Eastern European setting, and *Full Spectrum Warrior*, an urban-warfare number featuring a nine-soldier unit. The next mission is to conquer America's armchair warriors: last June, game publisher THQ released an Xbox version of *FSW* to widespread critical acclaim. • Even when fully armored, Humvees frequently become fiery deathtraps for American soldiers in Iraq, according to a recent study by Scripps Howard News Service. So what's with the racing flames on the Yo Soy El Army Custom H2, a stateside recruiting prop described as "one tricked-out vehicle"? On tour with the Army wherever it goes in search of new enlisted men and women, this teenage fantasy comes fully loaded with leather interior, a monster sound system and 15 video screens. All that's missing is the smell of burning flesh.

BE HONEST: ARE YOU SURPRISED THAT SOME PEOPLE in Washington have plans to mislead America's foes and friends alike? For these folks, "You're either with us or against us" is beside the point. Last December, the *New York Times* uncovered a Pentagon debate over the proposed use of military-style disinformation campaigns – in Syria, France, Australia, wherever – to bolster a sagging US image abroad. The script: counter all those urban legends about American hegemony with our own fanciful narrative, and a global warming of hearts and minds will ensue. Syndicated columnist Richard Reeves speculated that the NYT story, brimming with unnamed sources, was leaked by defense officials anxious to kill any such scheme.

It wouldn't be the first time. The Office of Strategic Influence, which regarded foreign journalists as mules for pro-American propaganda, died swiftly at the hands of the press in 2002. But this brand of public disinformation – so-called strategic deception that blurs the boundaries between PR and psychological warfare – never truly disappears. In fact, it has a long and ignoble history inside the Beltway, from zealous spinning of the Vietnam debacle to the Office for Public Diplomacy, whose operatives packaged Ronald Reagan's Central American atrocities for the US mass media in the 1980s.

Strategic deception used to be all about fooling the enemy. During the Second World War, Allied commanders disinformed the Nazis into believing the Normandy invasion would come weeks later than it did. Winston Churchill said that in wartime, the truth is so precious it should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies. However, Generals Eisenhower and Patton would have agreed that fibbing as government policy is a dumb idea. As George Bush and Dick Cheney discovered with their weapons of mass destruction con job, pretty soon even your pals are giving you polygraph eyes.

Lies or not, the would-be architects of America's new information ministry are dreaming big. Last September, the Defense Science Board Task Force

presented the Pentagon with a report claiming that "US strategic communication must be transformed . . . To succeed, we must understand the United States is engaged in a generational and global struggle about ideas, not a war between the West and Islam. It is more than a war against the tactic of terrorism." The report added that "public diplomacy, public affairs, psychological operations (PSYOP) and open military information operations must be coordinated and energized."

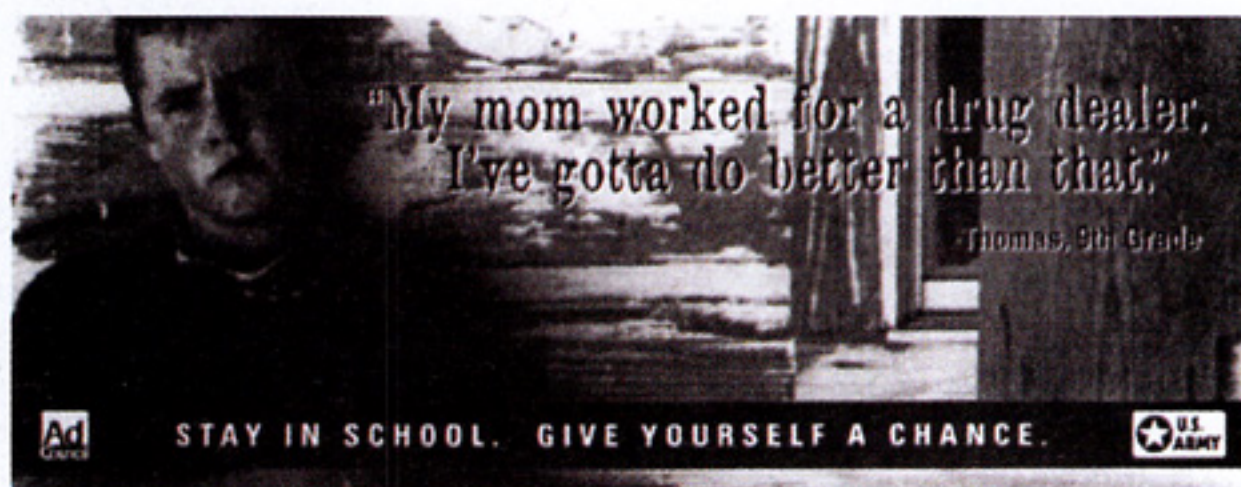
In an interview with *Adbusters*, Duke University political-science professor Peter Feaver explained the pitfalls of such an approach. "We want to say that we're doing good in Iraq," argued the coauthor of *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. "But if we [Americans] say it, people aren't going to believe it.

But if we can get, say, Arab voices saying it, that will be more believable, more effective. So, are there ways that we can get Arab voices to say it? You can see how you get into gray zones very quickly."

Feaver sounded less worried about the US treating the rest of the planet as its ideological canvas. "You have to do defensive and offensive diplomacy. That is to say, you have to answer the charges that have been levied against you, and you have to make your positive case and you have to devote resources in strategic areas where your message is having a hard time getting heard. You can see how it takes on a campaign aspect, even if it's just open diplomatic advocacy."

It's also obvious that Pentagon hawks haven't been waiting around for Congressional approval to set their plans in motion. Ironically, the bulk of the phony case for invading Iraq rested on Saddam Hussein's supposed deception. Just what is the Bush administration's definition of truth, and to whom is it precious? The final word goes to that master propagandist, Adolf Hitler, who correctly observed that no one will ask the victor if he lied.

Nick Rockel





MYTH MAKING

TO OBSERVE THE FRENZY OF MYTHMAKING AND propaganda that followed the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is to understand a fundamental rule of any war for public opinion: if you demonize your enemy, you don't have to reckon with him.

Immediately after Arafat's death, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced that Israel would be launching a propaganda campaign against him. "It is feared that after his funeral Arafat will become a national hero and freedom-fighter," Sharon was quoted as saying in *Ha'aretz*, Israel's leading

newspaper. "We will launch a tough struggle to portray his murderous character and the fact that he is a strategist of world terror who hurt innocent people, both Israelis and American diplomats."

Innocents have perished on both sides of this conflict, that much is sure, and Palestinians have borne the far greater share of casualties (by a ratio of more than 3:1 in the last four years, the majority civilian). Yet there was scant need to launch an official propaganda campaign. North American and British commentators, well-versed in the appropriate

allegiances to power and guided by the herd mentality that characterizes so much of the news media, weighed in with a zeal that did not seem to require much prompting.

Most were eager to portray Arafat as “the man who brought so much suffering to his own people” (*The Spectator*), “inept in power” (*The New York Times*), the “greatest con man of the age” (*The Globe and Mail*) and a “terrorist” whose life story would require “an encyclopedia to catalog all of the evil [he] committed” (*The Boston Globe*). The focus of their ire hinged largely on a specific well-turned myth: that Arafat blew a historic opportunity for peace in the year 2000 by spurning Israel’s “generous offer” at Camp David and opting instead for violence. This scenario, endlessly repeated and rarely scrutinized, has become the greatest myth of them all.

Palestinians, on the other hand, eulogized their elected president as the embodiment of their hopes for self-determination and freedom from nearly four decades of military occupation and the ongoing theft of their land. Most of the 3.5 million Palestinians living in the impoverished West Bank and Gaza Strip have never known a day free of Israeli tanks, checkpoints, curfews, house demolitions, land confiscation and regular military raids on their

villages, cities and homes. It is rare to meet a Palestinian man who has never been arrested, and many are held, like the prisoners of Guantánamo Bay, without trial, legal representation or even any stated criminal charge. Though Palestinian civilians are killed or wounded daily by Israeli forces, their deaths, and the conditions of their lives, rarely make headlines. They have been, by and large, denied entry to what Susan Sontag termed the “Western memory museum.”

It was Yasser Arafat who single-handedly put the plight of Palestinians on the international agenda. It is for this that he is loved and for this that he is hated. Like most political leaders, he was no pacifist. While not in a league with the likes of Ariel Sharon – who as defense minister orchestrated the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, which led to the death of tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians – Arafat used the tools of violence. Yet he was not an intractable warrior. As he said during his address to the United Nations in 1974, “I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter’s gun. Do not let

LEFT: YASSER ARAFAT WAS A 19-YEAR OLD ENGINEERING STUDENT IN CAIRO WHEN THE STATE OF ISRAEL WAS FOUNDED IN 1948. THE RESULTING EXPULSION OF PALESTINIANS – KNOWN AS THE NAQBA (CATASTROPHE) – LED ARAFAT TO DEVOTE HIS LIFE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN HOMELAND.

RIGHT: ARAFAT’S SUCCESS AS HEAD OF THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION’S MOST POWERFUL WING – FATAH – LED TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS LEADER OF THE ENTIRE PLO IN 1969. BY THEN, HE HAD BECOME THE FACE OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, RECOGNIZED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY HIS SIGNATURE KEFFIYEH HEADADDRESS.



the olive branch fall from my hand.” He continued to call for negotiations with Israel even from the besieged, bombed-out compound in Ramallah where he spent the final three years of his life, a prisoner like the people he represented.

It was Arafat who, in 1988, fundamentally reversed Palestinian policy, recognizing Israel’s right to exist and agreeing to a two-state solution that would surrender to Israel 78 percent of historic Palestine in exchange for a Palestinian state on the remaining 22 percent. Such a solution, embraced by the international community to this day, is one that the government of Israel has yet to accept, despite polls showing the willingness of most Israeli citizens to do so.

Yet the Western press tells quite a different story. The offer Israel proposed in 2000, which would have carved the West Bank into Bantustan-like cantons crisscrossed by illegal Israeli settlements and “Jewish-only” roads, was characterized in the media as extraordinarily generous. Indeed it was the most that Israel had offered to that date, a sign of progress that ought to have been a starting point for future negotiations.

But Arafat played the rejectionist – or so goes the constant refrain. The Palestinian leader chose violence over diplomacy, showing his “true face” as a murderer unable to, in President Bill Clinton’s words, “make the final jump from revolutionary to statesman.” Unwilling to accept Israel’s “generous offer,” Arafat is said to have personally orchestrated the Al-Aqsa intifada that compelled Israelis to choose hard-line military leader Ariel Sharon as their defender. Except that it was Sharon, then an opposition leader in Israel, who marched on the Muslim holy site of Al-Aqsa mosque in Arab East Jerusalem, accompanied by a thousand armed soldiers and

generating predictable protests. Fighting between Sharon’s guards and Palestinian protestors led to the death of seven Palestinians, setting off the intifada. Yet even the Israeli left wing, bitterly disappointed by the failures of Camp David, bought the line that Arafat was a master terrorist who proved that Israel had “no partner for peace.”

Ipsa facto, the occupation must go on. The Israeli settlements must expand. The American-subsidized military must continue to wage war on a largely unarmed civilian population.

Robert Malley, President Clinton’s special assistant for Arab-Israeli affairs at Camp David, has extensively refuted the myths that portray Arafat as arch-villain. While acknowledging the man’s shortcomings, Malley blames the final breakdown in negotiations not on Arafat, but on Israel’s lame-duck Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who by the time talks recommenced in January 2001 was trailing far behind Sharon in the polls and ordered his delegation to call off negotiations.

The myth was recently exploded once again by Amos Malka, head of Israeli military intelligence during Camp David. According to Malka, the

THE AMBASSADOR

The more people become informed about the Israel-Palestine conflict, the more they sympathize with Palestinians. For that reason, *hasbara* – Hebrew for “explaining,” or public relations – is a national obsession for Israelis. Indeed, most Israelis believe that criticism from the international community is not due to their government’s policies or behavior, but rather to its inability to adequately explain itself.

A new Israeli reality TV show called *The Ambassador* offers a candid view of the battle to control the grand narrative. To win a one-year position with an Israel advocacy group in New York, attractive, young, multilingual Israelis compete to defend Israel’s reputation to the world. The winner is he or she who most effectively spins Israel’s story.

Based on Donald Trump’s hit reality show *The Apprentice*, the first episode had 14 contestants separating into male and female teams to address an audience at Cambridge University in Britain. The women’s team lost when contestant Ofra Bin Nun responded to a student’s question by saying, “Let me make it clear that Israel has not taken anything from anyone.” The audience erupted in laughter. Bin Nun was dismissed – not because what she said was untrue, but because she was not believed.

Further episodes involve diplomatic tasks in New York, Washington, France and elsewhere, judged by a team composed of a former Israeli army spokesman, a former head of the Shin Bet secret service and a TV political correspondent. Reality, balance, factual accuracy or Palestinian concerns are not factors in the judging.



perception that Arafat rejected the two-state solution and instead decided to destroy Israel (a laughable notion to anyone remotely familiar with Israel's massive military supremacy) patently contradicted Israeli intelligence reports at the time. In fact, Israel's intelligence sector found that Arafat was committed to continuing on the diplomatic path that he had pioneered. Like the twisted intelligence that led to the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, the decision to misconstrue Arafat's intent, concludes Robert Malley in the *New York Review of Books*, was "based on deliberate distortion of intelligence for political purposes."

It worked, and only too well. Israel's leadership conveniently evaded any need to give up occupied land and explained their intransigence as the unfortunate lack of a true partner for peace. The much-vaunted "Gaza disengagement" proposal is merely a troop redeployment that sacrifices a handful of the most costly-to-defend settlements in exchange for an American promise that most West Bank

IN 1994, ARAFAT AND ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN RECEIVED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT. AT THE TIME OF ARAFAT'S DEATH A DECADE LATER, A PALESTINIAN STATE REMAINED AS ELUSIVE AS EVER. STILL, PALESTINIANS OF ALL STRIPES MOURNED THE LOSS OF A MAN WHO HAD EMBODIED THEIR CAUSE AND CAPTURED THE WORLD'S ATTENTION ON THEIR BEHALF.

colonies can remain under permanent Israeli control. As recently noted in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the disengagement will only make the electronically fenced Gaza Strip into "the largest prison in the world, the jailers leaving the inside but guarding the doors."

Last fall, Ariel Sharon's senior adviser, Dov Weisglass, explained the significance of the Gaza disengagement to an Israeli audience, calling it "formaldehyde" designed to freeze the political process. "And when you freeze that process you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state and you prevent a discussion about the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem. Effectively, this whole package that is called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed from our agenda indefinitely," Weisglass told *Ha'aretz*.

Weisglass explained that Israel has educated the world to understand that there is no one to talk to. "And we received a no-one-to-talk-to certificate. That certificate says: 1) There is no one to talk to. 2) As long as there is no one to talk to, the geographic status quo remains intact. 3) The certificate will be revoked only when this-and-this happens - when Palestine becomes Finland. 4) See you then, and shalom."

It is the Palestinians who have had no one to talk to.

Yasser Arafat's legacy has been to deny the powerful their customary due: the right to construct their own narrative, their own version of history, unchallenged. It is precisely because Arafat was a partner for peace – a partner in a process that would have Israel relinquish Palestinian land and resources and give up on the military solution that is the power base for most of its leadership – that Israel worked so diligently to demonize him.

Deborah Campbell

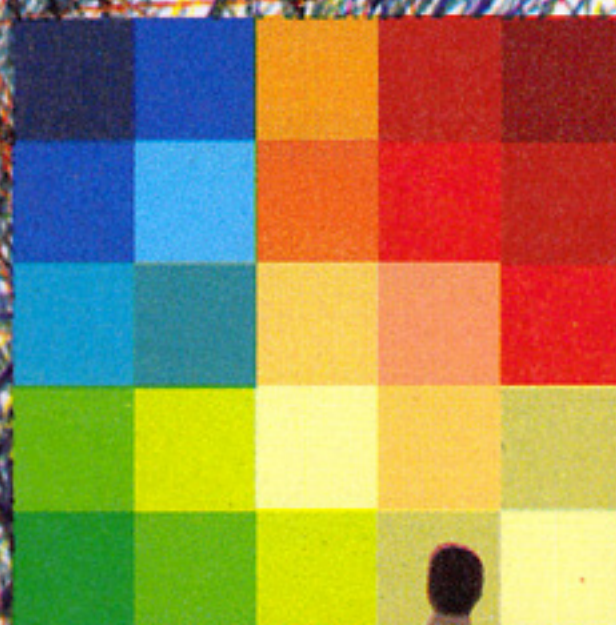
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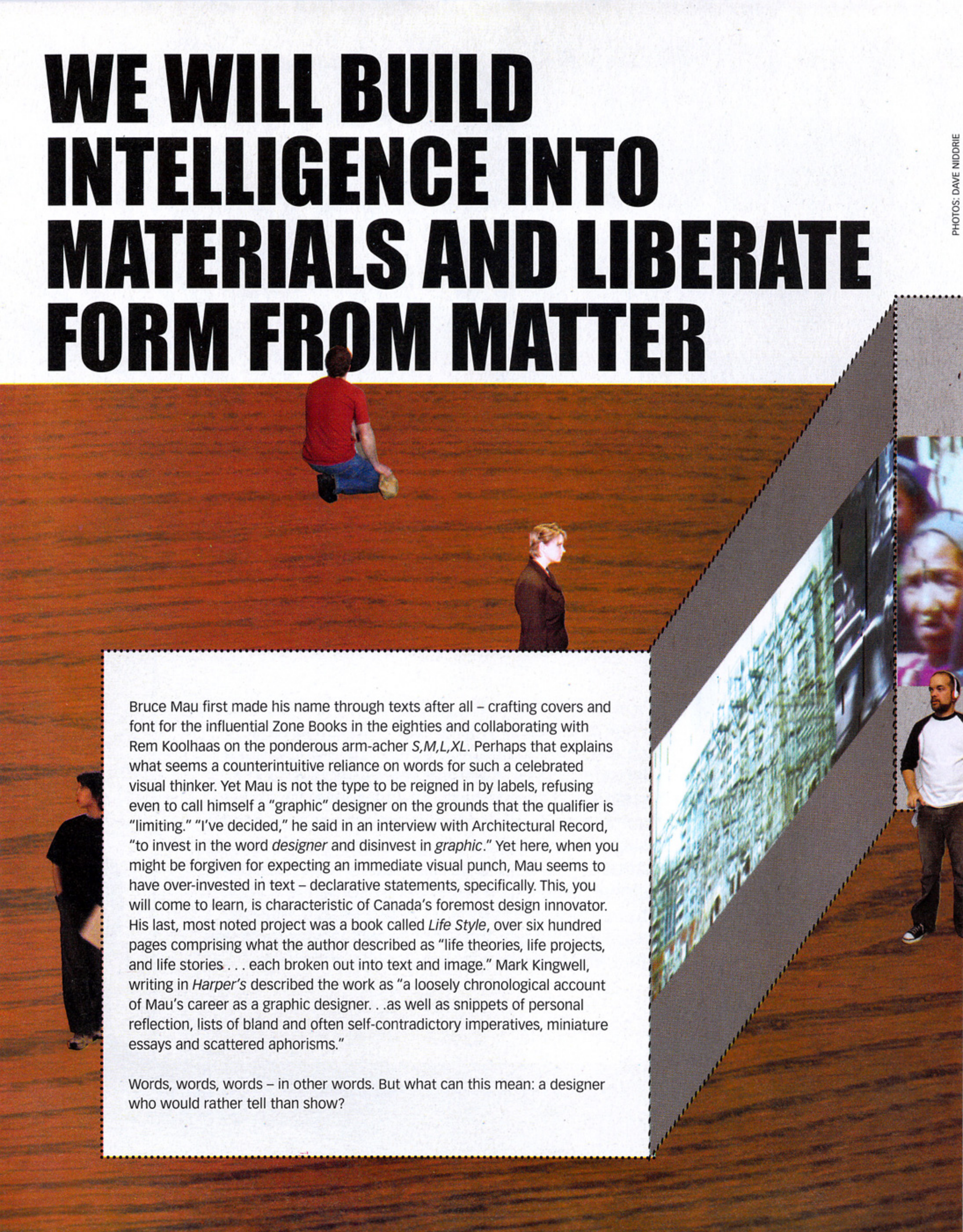


Altria

You walk through the gallery doors and are literally confronted by a wall of text—Helvetica-Neue, an artist friend later identifies. The stark, blocky lettering looms, daunting and imperious. Don't suppose, it seems to be saying, these are just some pseudo-philosophical ramblings that can be skipped over before you get to the visual nittygritty. Already this seems not so much a show about global design, as a show about someone's soon-to-be-published thoughts about design. Indeed, Massive Change, the Website will later inform you that Massive Change, the Book is on its way.

WE WILL BUILD INTELLIGENCE INTO MATERIALS AND LIBERATE FORM FROM MATTER

PHOTOS: DAVE NIDDRIE



Bruce Mau first made his name through texts after all – crafting covers and font for the influential Zone Books in the eighties and collaborating with Rem Koolhaas on the ponderous arm-acher *S,M,L,XL*. Perhaps that explains what seems a counterintuitive reliance on words for such a celebrated visual thinker. Yet Mau is not the type to be reigned in by labels, refusing even to call himself a “graphic” designer on the grounds that the qualifier is “limiting.” “I’ve decided,” he said in an interview with *Architectural Record*, “to invest in the word *designer* and disinvest in *graphic*.” Yet here, when you might be forgiven for expecting an immediate visual punch, Mau seems to have over-invested in text – declarative statements, specifically. This, you will come to learn, is characteristic of Canada’s foremost design innovator. His last, most noted project was a book called *Life Style*, over six hundred pages comprising what the author described as “life theories, life projects, and life stories . . . each broken out into text and image.” Mark Kingwell, writing in *Harper’s* described the work as “a loosely chronological account of Mau’s career as a graphic designer. . .as well as snippets of personal reflection, lists of bland and often self-contradictory imperatives, miniature essays and scattered aphorisms.”

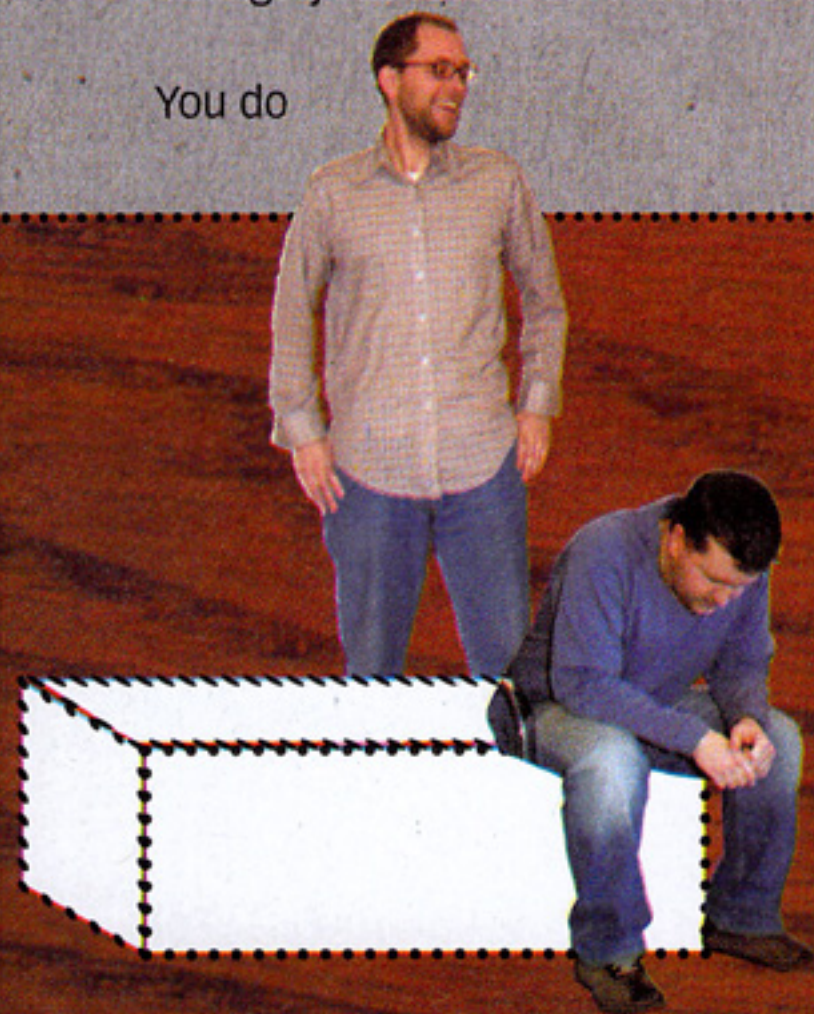
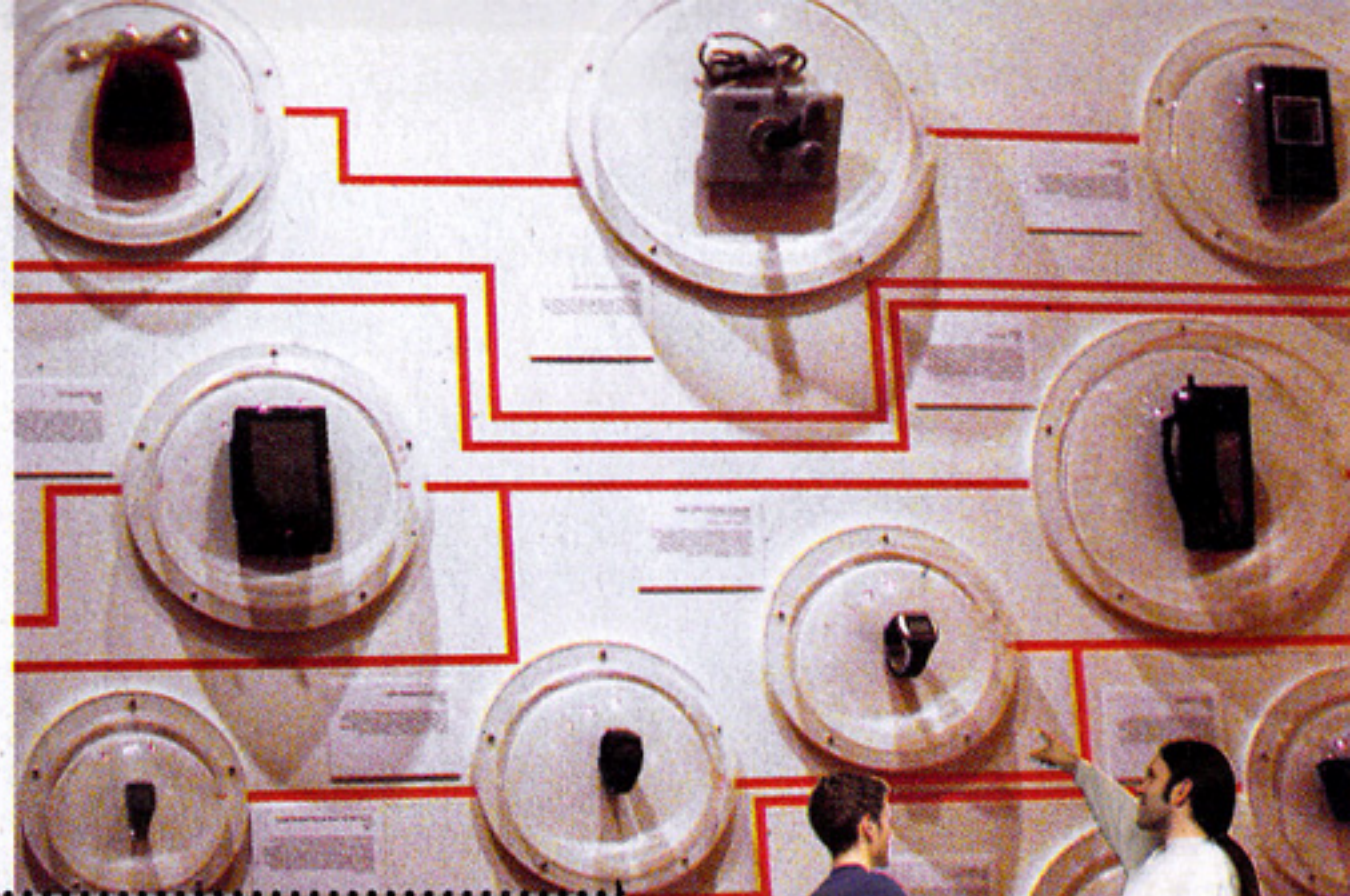
Words, words, words – in other words. But what can this mean: a designer who would rather tell than show?

WE WILL CREATE URBAN SHELTER FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD

Moving beyond the walls of text, you emerge into the first of Mau's designated "design economies" – the Urban Economies section. There are images here – distant urban landscapes projected onto the wall – yet text remains ubiquitous. Several droning voiceovers play in accompaniment to the projections. They remind you of the educational reels you used to see in high school, or a corporate information video. Optimistic yet matter-of-fact – strangely inflectionless. More urban photography hangs from the ceiling in Plexiglas bubbles – there is even text etched across the bubbles, demanding answers to questions such as "How can cities be sustainable?" Already, however, you're too texted out to read what the answers might be, so you move on to Movement Economies.

These are mini-manifestos, you think, remembering that Mau is known for making such statements. In 1998, he penned *An Incomplete Manifesto for Growth*, which was delivered at the Doors of Perception conference in Amsterdam. The manifesto, a list of forty-three gnomic dicta ("Go deep." "Study."), was reprinted in *Life Style* – perhaps representative of the "scattered aphorisms" Kingwell mentions. On the website of Bruce Mau Design, the manifesto is described as an "articulation of the statements that exemplify [Mau's] beliefs, motivations and strategies." First on the list: Allow events to change you. #3: Process is more important than outcome. #33: Keep moving.

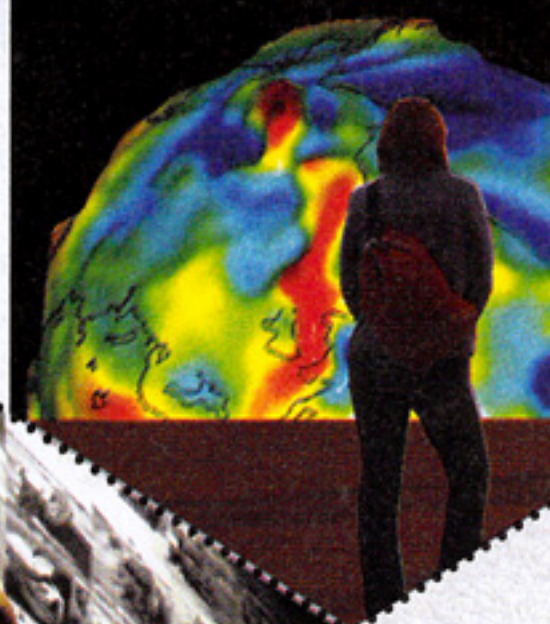
You do



WE ARE COMMITTED TO MAXIMUM FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WITH MINIMUM IMPACT



At last the textual curtains are drawn aside and you find yourself looking at things, objects, the wonders of modern design you've been promised. Here we have transportation alternatives – electric cars like The Sparrow and The Gizmo – a gleam with potential. The Segway Human Transporter – just look what good design can do: advantage the disadvantaged, correct fundamental inequities. A fast, clean, equitable future is within our grasp. You are reminded of the wait in line for Space Mountain at Disney World when you were a kid – “Here’s to the future – and you!” the animatronic beings declared, displaying one marvel-to-come after another (although the only one you can recall with any vividness is a gigantic television set). Mau’s enthusiasm for good design, his hints of utopianism, have a stealthy infectiousness. Exhilarated, you move into Information Economies. That colorful fireworks display on all the Massive Change promotional material can be found here and is, it turns out, a map of the internet. You enter a darkened room of similarly gorgeous, digitized “global portraits”. The text is omnipresent, but dwarfed at this point, and the Image Economies room rewards you with almost no text whatsoever – merely an entire room covered with two-dimensional images. The floor, ceiling, walls and benches are all obscured by countless breathtaking examples of modern imaging – sonar, X-rays ultrasounds and gamma radiation.





**WE WILL SEAMLESSLY
INTEGRATE ALL SUPPLY
AND DEMAND AROUND
THE WORLD.**

Something about the Market Economies section makes you yearn to sink back into the sea of images you've just left. The installation consists of dangling boxes covered in text, and upright boxes also covered in text, each containing television monitors – boxy, text-covered stalagmites and stalactites. You stand under one of the stalactites and trigger a motion-detector which plays a recording about Dee Hock, the founder of Visa and the Chaordic Commons. It goes on too long and you get bored. You approach one of the stalagmite monitors and scan a card you've been given like you'd scan your Interac at Safeway. The monitor sounds: Boop! And runs a video about Wal-Mart – a prime example of an "efficient design system," you're told. You learn that Wal-Mart is the world's largest company with a private satellite network and "more people in uniform than the US army." You wait for more, maybe something about the vampiric nature of the company, how it sucks the lifeblood out of small communities. Optimism is all very well, but surely there's a difference between optimism and rose-colored glasses. You wait. The video is over.

The next kiosk tells you how billionaire Bill Gates and his wife Melinda have established the world's largest charitable foundation. That is all the kiosk knows about Bill Gates.

Let's try upstairs.



There are plenty more wonders to behold – self-cleaning glass, self-healing plastic, and aero-gel, an insulating material that is 99.8% air – but any remaining gee-whizzitude is promptly stomped out of you by Military Economies.

It is the only section to be introduced by a question as opposed to a brash, utopian statement. “Will we shift from the service of war to the service of life?” It feels like it’s been posed by a different Bruce Mau altogether— a hopeful, doe-eyed child tugging at your pantleg, brimming with all the faith and potential Massive Change has represented up to this point.

Yet how can the answer be “Yes”? You wander amid thirty-foot banners, confronting gigantic images of futuristic super-soldiers in attack postures. The new military gear, you read, enhances “soldier lethality, survivability, mobility and sustainment.” You see dehydrated packets of food, tanks, Palm Pilots, fast-loading assault weaponry styled after the Super Soaker (the children’s toy), and you read more text.

“Innovations developed by the military have created spinoffs within almost every design practice. For better or for worse, the military project continues to be one of the most powerful engines of technological innovation and design.”

“For better or for worse” – this is as deep as Mau delves—the textual equivalent of a smile and a shrug. If he wishes to be so matter-of-fact, why stop at mere representations of machine-guns? Why no banners depicting exploding human heads, torsos riddled with precisely engineered holes? Design in action.

Next, you are wandering through a room stacked with junk. Egg cartons, newspapers, juice containers – recycling. This is Manufacturing Economies. You can’t help but wonder at all the brand names on display here. Coffee, laundry detergent, cereal, fast food. You can’t help but make the connection with Massive Change’s corporate sponsor, Altria, formerly known as Phillip Morris, owner of Kraft Foods.

**WILL WE
SHIFT FROM
THE SERVICE
OF WAR TO
THE SERVICE
OF LIFE?**



with the space race
left after the Soviet
of human design
program within the
agency (NASA) and
ed the program.
expeditions, seeing
to the inflexible
early conceptualizations
spurring he formed
the “intermediate”
of new people



WE WILL DESIGN EVOLUTION

Living Economies – genetically modified corn, a ghostly, cloned human nose in a beaker, a model of a featherless GM chicken engineered for harsh climates. Your mind keeps going back to Mau's *Incomplete Manifesto for Growth* – this is growth all right, as literal as it gets. Mau is clearly enamored of the notion, of the freedom it embodies. Labels and limitations are sloughed off in favor of cryptic, contradictory sloganeering (#20: Be careful to take risks.") Mau can't be called on this, because his philosophy is so deliberately fluid (#8: Drift. #40: Jump fences.). *Life Style*, for example, was criticized for being "frustratingly unfocused," "a study in obfuscation made magnificent by shiny trim." Mau's Zen-like reply was to affirm the importance that such criticisms be made. The manifesto is by definition incomplete – meaning open-ended, meaning, potentially, anything he wants it to mean. In privileging an ideal as wide-open as growth, Mau positions himself high above the scribbling rabble, beyond their limiting need to come down on one side of a question or another, to see a concept through to a conclusion.

Massive Change suggests we can all be as optimistic as Bruce Mau. We can assure ourselves that human progress takes place in the name of growth – and there we can stop. We can marvel at military know-how and applaud corporate beneficence without so much as a somber nod to the venality and power lust fueling the furnace, let alone any nasty by-products like violence and wealth disparity. Good design is good design, we can tell ourselves – for better or for worse.

Lynn Coady writes fiction and essays. She is the author of novels Strange Heaven and Saints of Big Harbour. The new novel is Mean Boy, coming soon.





Among scientists there is a general assumption dating back to Francis Bacon that scientific progress is for the better of all mankind. Perhaps the time is coming, thanks to arguments by scientists like Bill Joy, where that assumption can be questioned in a serious way. - Francis Fukuyama

THE VOYAGE MUST CONTINUE.



To be human is to explore. To push the envelope with the best available technology, achieving unexpected breakthroughs. Opening trade routes. Overcoming gravity. Propelling science to one discovery after another. Now modern explorers await the ships that will take them farther: Space Shuttles, re-certified for flight, and more advanced spacecraft for voyages to the planets and beyond. To these goals, near and far term, we dedicate ourselves.

The Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2004

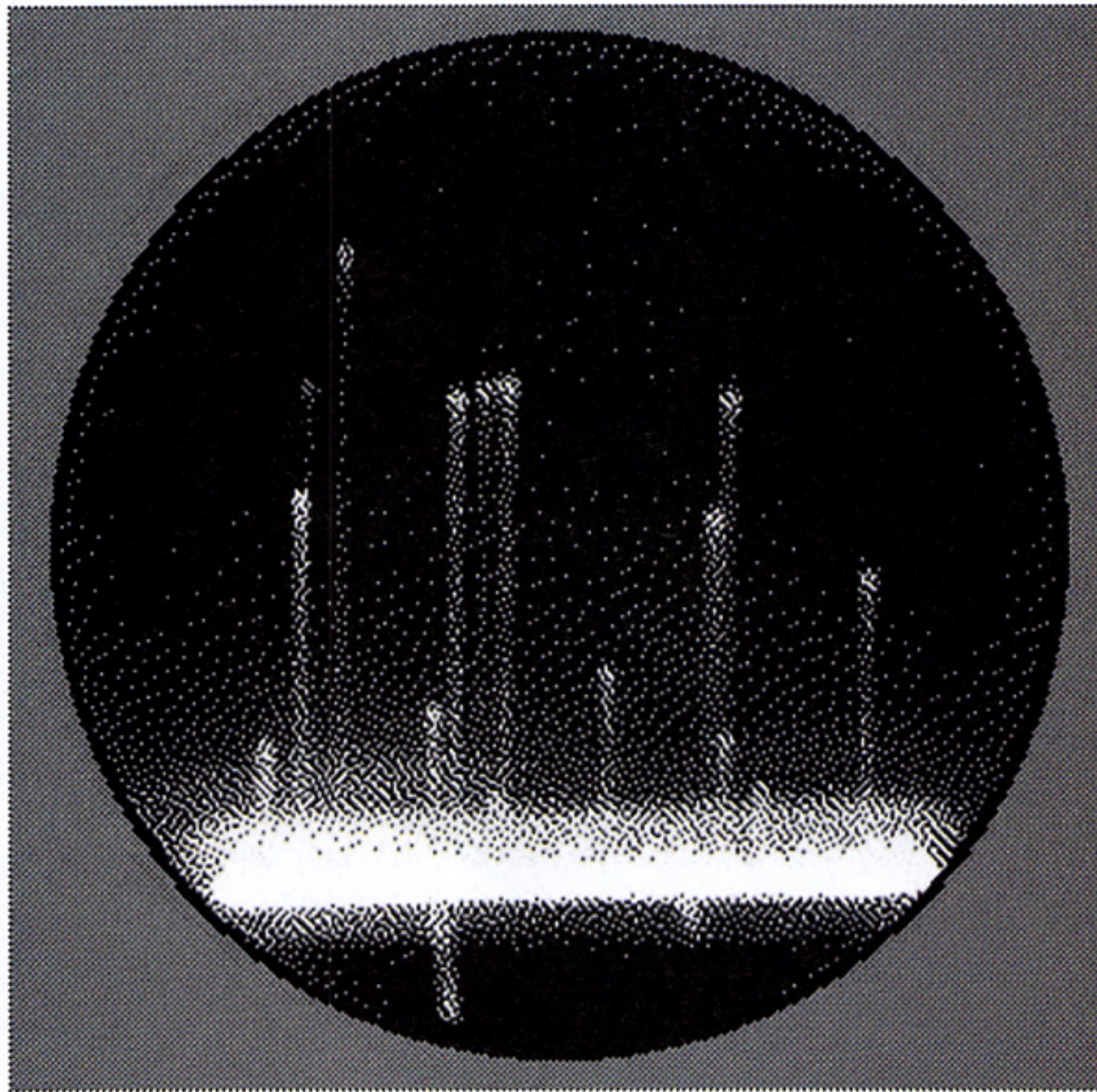
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We never forget who we're working for™



NUCLEAR FISSION

The discovery of nuclear fission in the 1930s revolutionized our ability to produce energy. Today, nuclear power heats homes, lights whole cities and powers icebreakers that ply the Arctic. Best of all, those classic hour-glass reactor towers don't belch any clouds of black smoke. Pound for pound, nuclear energy produces less waste and air pollution than the fossil fuels that continue to choke an increasingly urban world.



Another way of looking at it: nuclear power is one of the four technological horsemen of the apocalypse. That's the view of Bill Joy, cofounder of Sun Microsystems and current techno-skeptic. Nuclear waste is so toxic and enduring that we're forced to bury it in the bowels of remote mountains, leaving a problem for thousands of generations down the line. Nuclear fission also opened the door to the creation of weapons powerful and numerous enough to extinguish all life on Earth. But that's not the worst of it. The worst is that nuclear fission was only a beginning.



KRI PHOTOS

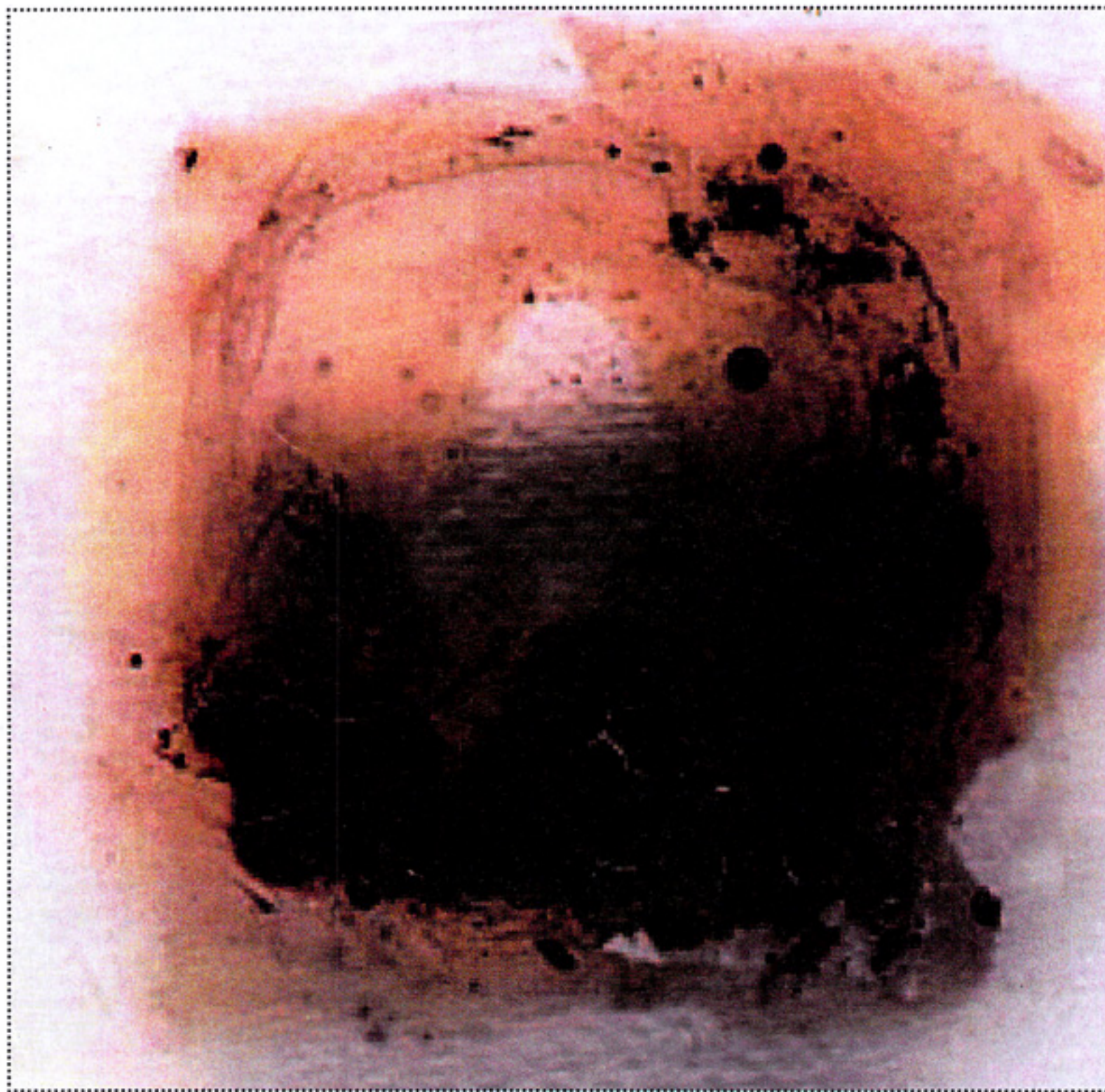
Nevada's Yucca Mountain is set to become the largest nuclear waste repository in the world. Its vast grid of tunnels will eventually house 77,000 tons of spent fuel rods from aircraft carriers, submarines and power plants. All this is necessary because Plutonium-239 – a key component in the production of nuclear warheads – has a radioactive half-life of 24,000 years and is dangerous for a quarter of a million years. That's 12,000 generations.



MAXIM KNAZOV/AFIP

GENETIC ENGINEERING

Human beings have been modifying plants and breeding animals for selected traits for millennia, always aiming to improve yields, shelf-life or flavor. Today, genetic engineering could allow us to accomplish what has so far been impossible: feed every hungry mouth, end malnutrition and vaccinate everyone on Earth. Vitamin A has already been spliced into rice and oral vaccines integrated into fruit – and this is only the dawn of GE technology.



But: we still have no idea what the long-term ramifications of GE technology will be. What we do know, as Amory Lovins has noted, is that biotechnology speeds up biological evolution “by roughly a billionfold, from a measured pace in which innovations are rigorously pre-tested over eons . . . to the frenetic pace of next quarter’s earnings reports.” If that sounds like exaggeration, here’s the same idea as expressed by Rodney Brooks, director of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at MIT: “Our 30-year goal is to have such exquisite control over the genetics of living systems that instead of growing a tree, cutting it down and building a table out of it, we will ultimately be able to grow the table.”



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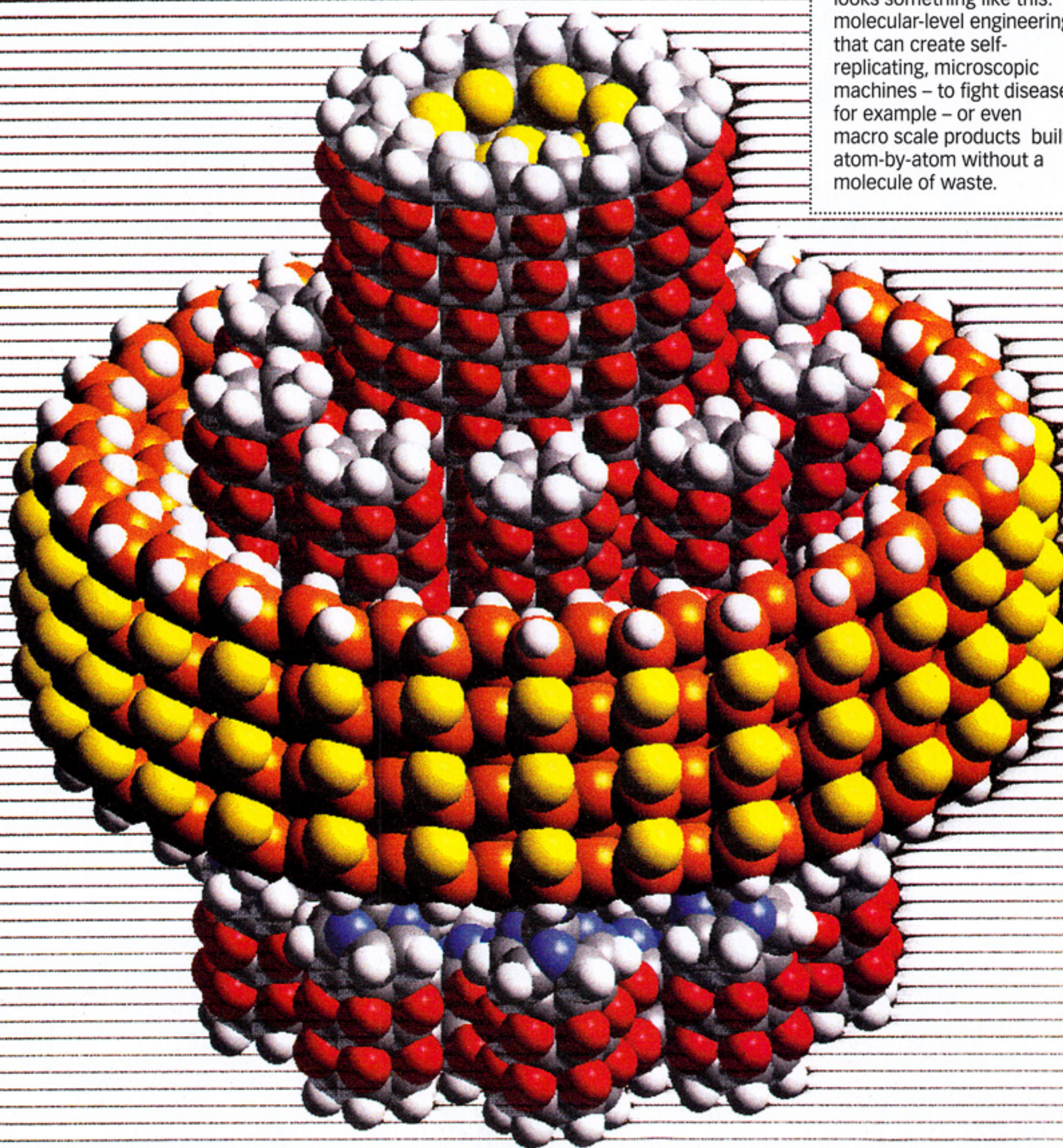


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NANOTECHNOLOGY

So far, the nanotech dream looks something like this: molecular-level engineering that can create self-replicating, microscopic machines – to fight disease, for example – or even macro scale products built atom-by-atom without a molecule of waste.



And the nightmare looks like this: a "nano spill" – self-replicating nano-robots run amok and an unstoppable "gray goo" expands over the surface of the Earth.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. TWELVE CUBES OF LIGHT, each rotating past the other, slipping into the vacant slot left by the preceding cube. The purpose is to massage the cortex into a smooth program of alpha waveform production. Patients appear to derive the most benefit, Saito has noted, by working through the entire routine, pausing rhythmically at the completion of each sequence to allow the electronics to catch up with the subject's progress.

But what are the effects, he ponders, once the patient has identified the therapeutic parlor trick and sussed out the mechanism that's supposed to be affecting him? What happens if his conscious mind tracks the incoming data with greater precision than the machinery? Click, click, click. Saito leans forward. Perhaps this particular arrangement of cubes is novel. He presses a button, storing the arrangement in cold memory. To be studied later.

He is pleased the treatment has proven as efficacious as it has – on the vast majority of patients, at least. Ironical, then, that Saito should be so powerless to alter the substance of his own compulsive addictions. Thinking this, he produces a pocket lighter and sears the flesh on the back of his right hand, stifling a primal vocalization. He buries his shame into his handkerchief (not only shame, but evidence – self-immolation being an offense not only to the state, but to Saito's ancestors for historical reasons particular to his family) and recalibrates the equipment for the next patient. He readjusts himself and smooths the front of his white coat, feeling his sweat cool against the skin of his wrists. If anyone has seen him, it will cost him his career.

Of what use is life though, at this point? They've made his impossible. The work he is carrying out will radicalize the treatment of conditions such as his, given the eventual push into mass production.

For a moment Saito shifts out of time and is aloft, floating on the awareness of what he is so very close to achieving. Still, it is unlikely any of his early projections will prove accurate. He's already had to make a number of compromises which limit the ultimate effectiveness of his original design. He doubts now that the cubes can do much more than narcotize; make the patient docile and open to personal questions. Saito ruminates on this for a moment before taking the lighter back out of his pocket and burning several marks into the top of his hand. He tries to light his skin up completely and succeeds in singeing the sleeve of his coat. With the smoke, he imagines his kami making its way up to the ceiling and spreading out across its surface, crawling in several directions at once towards the ductwork and vents.

A knock comes – an abrupt punctuation – and the door opens, pulling him back down to the floor. Of course. They have seen. It is all over now. His work is finished. The patients will suffer, but then patients are always suffering. With his expulsion, Saito's involvement with the project will be overwritten and all record of his groundwork will be lost to the subsequent, inevitable revisions. This is cause for small celebration – at least now they will erase him. At least now this thing he has put into motion will reach its conclusion without being attached to his grandfather's name. This represents, Saito supposes, some kind of reconciliation. Still it feels as if his kami has dissipated. There is nothing left for them to kill now.

Stanley Lieber has never misappropriated tax dollars, aided in the proliferation of mentally intrusive technologies or committed ritual suicide.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The sci-fi vision of "AI" is already a part of everyday life in speech-recognition software, computers that play chess and servers that route our email. Robots are hard at work in hundreds of everyday situations, and computer programs routinely perform unimaginably complex tasks. In time, artificial intelligence will unlock puzzles that the human mind has not: nuclear fusion, the cure for cancer, the formula to double or triple our lifespans.

But this might also be the fourth technological horseman. After artificial intelligence comes artificial consciousness – and machines or systems that think and ultimately act for themselves. How long until our priorities are no longer the priorities of our sentient creations? To understand the grim possibilities of a dawning era of superior artificial species, you only need to do the following: look at the way that humans treat animals.

CLONING: CENTRAL PLANNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY?

FRENCH NOVELIST MICHEL HOUELLEBECQ'S *The Elementary Particles* is a book of brutal truths about the cultural upheaval that spread across Europe and America from the 1960s through the 1970s. Unlike memoirs of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China that focus on the horrors of the time, this novel is about the personal and social consequences decades later of what we might call the Great Western Cultural Revolution.

Through the lenses of his characters Bruno and Michel, half-brothers whose mother left them to live unencumbered in California, Houellebecq ponders how liberation, sexual and otherwise, smashed not only authority and a sense of responsibility, but love itself. In the name of throwing off oppressive tradition, the protracted revolt of the 60s generation as it marched through society's institutions acted as a battering ram for the unrestrained freedom of market-mediated self-interest.

As Houellebecq sees it, by dismantling any meaningful commitment to community and others, the liberatory movements of the later decades of the 20th century opened the floodgates to consumerism, allowing it to invade every aspect of life and turning all those liberated individuals into aimless atoms competing with each other for recognition. Thus the title *The Elementary Particles*.

If there are any heroes in this disturbing novel, it is Bruno's wrinkled old grandmother who unglamorously raises him with unconditional love, expecting nothing in return. She is not in the market. She just cares without calculation. Suddenly she dies and there is a terrifying emptiness.

In this critique Houellebecq shares the perspective of other French critics of totalistic capitalism from Régis Debray to Jacques Delors, who condemn American-led globalization as pushing not a market economy, but a "market society," on the rest of the world. Houellebecq's notion of free individuals as elementary particles is also similar to Pope John Paul

II's view that, absent divine love and a moral order, men and women today live too often in "solitude without hope." "Bowling alone" is how the American sociologist Robert Putnam has put it.

But Houellebecq's brilliance comes in asking, "What next?" He answers by imagining how our liberated civilization will mesh with the genetic revolution. It is this dark vision of posthuman history that may make Houellebecq the George Orwell of our time.

Being a French intellectual, Houellebecq sees the world in dialectical motion as phenomena turn into their opposite. The radical injustice of early capitalism gave birth to the overcompensation of totalitarian communism. Closer to his theme, the Frankfurt School critical theorists famously postulated that German fascism arose not as conventionally thought because of the authoritarian character of the paternalistic German family, but the opposite: The absence of the father from the home as he went to work in the factories of the Industrial Revolution led to the yearning for a Führer to fill the gap.

Similarly, for Houellebecq, a civilization anxious and exhausted from the incessant competition of radical freedom will too easily be drawn toward the happy womb of biological conformism. This is what is suggested by Houellebecq's character, Michel, a genetic scientist whose last name is the same as the founder of the Soviet KGB, Djerzinsky.

Accustomed to the hollowness of living without love, yet still consumers obsessed with youthful mortality, won't such a civilization, asks Houellebecq, turn to the predesigned survival of the fittest through cloning, the central planning of the 21st century?

Nathan Gardels has been editor of New Perspectives Quarterly since its founding in 1985. This article was excerpted from NPQ's Fall 2004 issue.

THERE COMES A POINT WHEN KIDS FORGET THEY'RE LEARNING.
THEIR IMAGINATIONS IGNITE. AND THAT MOMENT
STAYS WITH THEM FOREVER.



Sparking a young person's natural curiosity. Encouraging their interest in math and science. These are the goals of Lockheed Martin's educational outreach to primary and secondary schools across America. With programs like Space Day, where kids can build and launch water rockets — and learn that physics can be fun. We also award grants to colleges and universities that demonstrate excellence in engineering and computer science programs. We're investing in education because we recognize it is essential to the future of our country. And because it's easier for students to reach for the stars when they have a solid launch pad.



It's a feedback loop. The soft militarization of everyday life – the Hummer, for example – leads to a kinder, gentler view of militarization itself, and so on, until we barely notice the daily reminders of perpetual war. It's the perfect mental environment for a company like Lockheed Martin, the largest military contractor in the United States and a corporation now angling to join the ranks of America's most trusted brands. "With technology, we've been able to make ourselves more secure and more humane," said Lockheed CEO Robert J. Stevens in a recent *New York Times* interview. With shock-and-awe being served with the morning Wheaties, the arms industry is moving to make warfare easier to swallow. The Lockheed dream is war without civilian casualties, without misfires, without friendly fire deaths – and with the benefit of robot soldiers, drone aircraft, and mobile surveillance labs. In short: the repositioning of war itself as cleaner and more moral with every high-tech advance. "I don't say this lightly," says Stevens. "Our industry has contributed to a change in humankind."

There are
thousands
who love
the things
you love.

How
will you
find them?

ebay

The power of all of us™



Palestinian children and their parents walk past Ma'on settlement on their way to school in at-Tuwani.

IT'S 7 A.M. AND I'M SITTING WITH FRIENDS IN THE shade of an olive tree in the south Hebron hills of Occupied Palestine. Our eyes are trained on a donkey trail as we wait for five children to come into view. When they appear, I take my position, and brace myself for the distinct possibility that masked Israeli settlers may come charging out of the nearby woods at any given moment and attack the whole lot of us with chains and bats. They have done so twice in the past month, hospitalizing two of my friends – one with a broken wrist, the other with a punctured lung. The grave offense we and the children have committed is that we want them to get to school safely. But in the mind of a settler, a five-year old on her way to school represents an obstacle to total Israeli control of Palestine. So she is fair game.

Such is life in the West Bank. At-Tuwani, the village I'm staying in, sits in the shadow of Ma'on settlement, home to a particularly virulent – but by no means unmatched – strain of Israeli settlers. At-Tuwani's residents hoped the presence of international observers would keep the settlers' aggression in check. In addition to terrorizing children, they have assaulted and shot at local shepherds and their sheep, ripped up olive trees and stolen olives, poisoned one of at-Tuwani's wells with a dead chicken, disrupted the wheat, lentil and barley harvest, and of course, confiscated land.

Because the Israeli government has allowed the settler transgressions to carry on with impunity, it is impossible to shrug them off as the excesses of a few rogue elements of Israeli society. They are in fact part of a decades-long, government-sanctioned policy to drive Palestinians out of their homes and into hopelessness. Indeed, when settlers attacked my friends the first time, one Israeli security worker blamed them for "upsetting the balance." For its part, the Israeli Defense Forces responded to the attacks by declaring the children's path to school a "closed military zone." This, of course, was exactly what the settlers wanted. And so what if the children are in turn faced with a ten kilometer detour? As the commanding lieutenant put it: "Ten kilometers is not a long way to school. . . These people are used to it."

If Palestinians had caused the disturbance, Palestinians would have been collectively punished. When settlers cause the disturbance, Palestinians are collectively punished. This is the nature of occupation. Children are terrified of walking to school, shepherds are prevented from herding on the land of their ancestors, and the victims of life-threatening physical attacks are told that they have upset the balance. The specific details of this injustice vary throughout Palestine, but the effects are the same. And an entire nation suffers a slow death.

Nicholas Klassen

THE PIANIST OF PALESTINE

As I watched the film *The Pianist*, I was struck by the similarities between the German occupiers' treatment of Poland's Jews and Israeli treatment of Palestinians. But when it came to the scene of German soldiers forcing Jewish musicians to play for them at a checkpoint, I thought to myself: "that's one thing Israeli soldiers have not yet done to Palestinians." Alas, I was wrong. Last November, Israel's *Ha'aretz* newspaper reported that an Israeli human rights organization was able to videotape Israeli soldiers forcing a Palestinian violinist to play for them at a roadblock near Nablus. The same organization confirmed that similar abuse had taken place months ago at another checkpoint near Jerusalem.

In typical Israeli whitewashing, the incident was dismissed by an army spokesperson as little more than "insensitivity," with no malicious intent to humiliate the Palestinians involved. And of course the usual mantra about soldiers having to "contend with a complex and dangerous reality" was again served as a ready, one-size-

fits-all excuse.

I wonder whether the same would

be said or accepted in describing the original Nazi practice at the Warsaw ghetto gates in the 1940s.

Regrettably, the analogy between the two illegal occupations does not stop here. Many of the methods of collective and individual "punishment" meted out to Palestinian civilians at the hands of young, racist, often sadistic Israeli soldiers are reminiscent of common Nazi practices against the Jews. Following a visit to the occupied Palestinian territories in 2003, Oona King, a Jewish member of the British parliament attested to this, writing: "The original founders of the Jewish state could surely not imagine the irony facing Israel today: in escaping the ashes of the Holocaust, they have incarcerated another people in a hell similar in its nature – though not its extent – to the Warsaw ghetto."

Even Tommy Lapid, Israel's justice minister and a Holocaust survivor himself, stirred a political storm last year when he told Israel radio that a picture of an elderly Palestinian woman searching in the debris for her medication had reminded him of his grandmother who died at Auschwitz.

I am beginning to understand why a whole nation was able to say: 'We did not know.'

Furthermore, he commented on his army's wanton and indiscriminate destruction of Palestinian homes, businesses and farms in Gaza at the time, saying: "[I]f we carry on like this, we will be expelled from the United Nations and those responsible will stand trial at The Hague."

Lately, some of Israel's war crimes have been revealed in eyewitness accounts of former soldiers who could no longer overlook their complicity in the humiliation, abuse and physical harm of innocent civilians. According to a recent report in the Israeli media, an army commander gratuitously beat Palestinians at the notorious Hawwara checkpoint. The most damning evidence against him was a video filmed by the army's education branch. The report stated the senior officer – knowing an army film crew was located nearby, and without any provocation – beat a Palestinian who was "flanked by his wife and children." The man was punched in the face, and "even kicked in the lower part of his body."

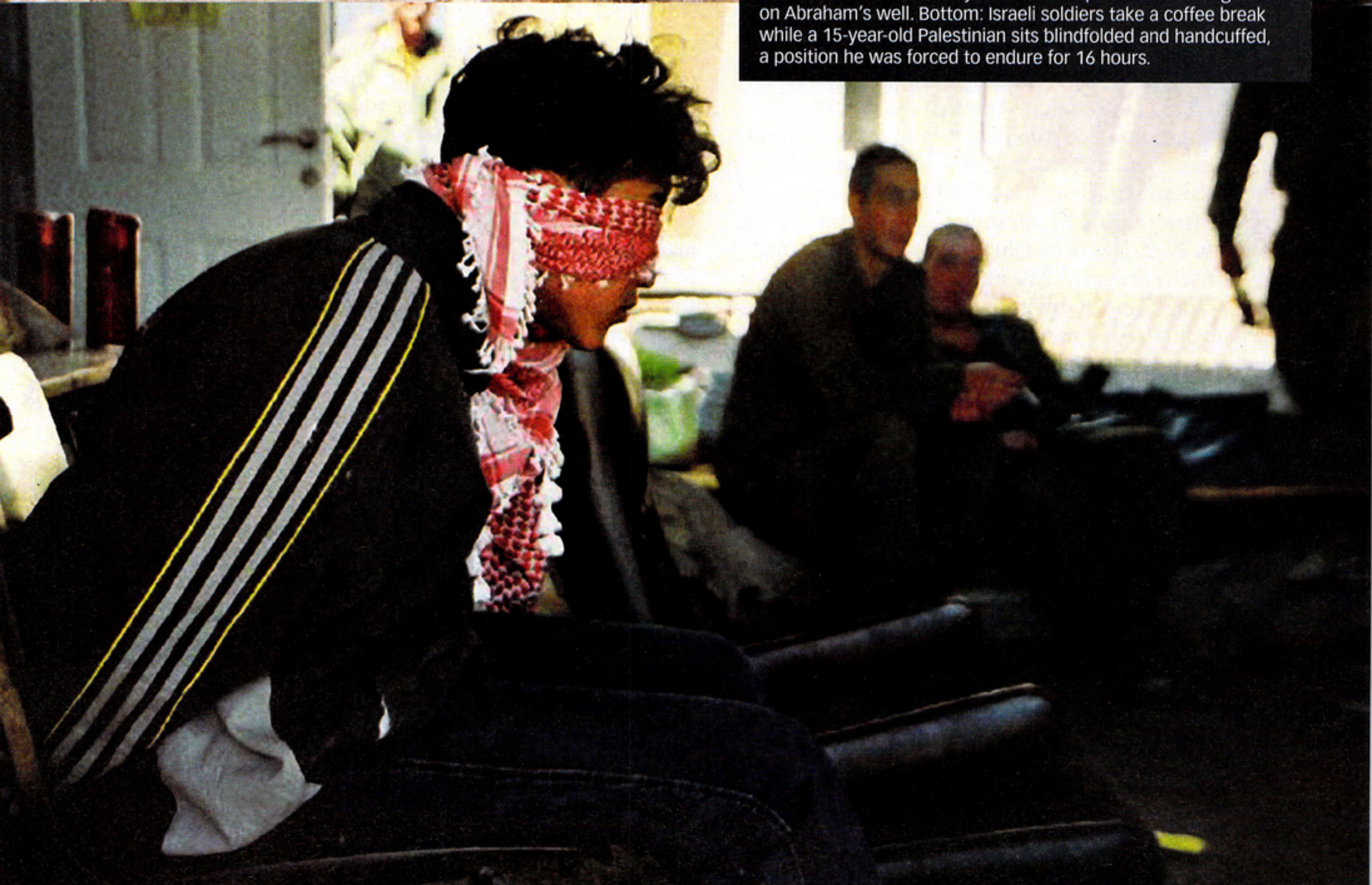
A recent Tel Aviv exhibit titled "Breaking the Silence," organized

by conscientious Israeli soldiers who served in occupied Hebron, used photographs and objects to expose the army's belligerence toward defenseless Palestinians. Inspired by anti-Arab graffiti such as "Arabs to the gas chambers" and "Spill Arab blood", soldiers used multiple methods to make the lives of average Palestinians intolerable. The exhibit's main curator described a particularly shocking policy of randomly spraying Palestinian neighborhoods for hours with heavy machine gun fire and grenades in response to any minor shooting at the Jewish colonies inside the city.

The Hebron horrors pale, however, in comparison to what Israeli army units have done in Gaza. In an unnerving interview with *Ha'aretz* in November 2003, Staff Sergeant (res.) Liran Ron Furer described the gradual transformation of every soldier to an "animal" when staffing a roadblock, irrespective of whatever values he may bring with him from home. The soldiers become infected with what Furer calls "checkpoint syndrome," causing them to act in "the most primal and impulsive manner, without



A Tel Aviv photo exhibit from June 2004 entitled "Breaking the Silence" consisted of images taken by Israeli soldiers stationed in the volatile West Bank city of Hebron. Top: Jewish settler graffiti on Abraham's well. Bottom: Israeli soldiers take a coffee break while a 15-year-old Palestinian sits blindfolded and handcuffed, a position he was forced to endure for 16 hours.



fear of punishment.”

“At the checkpoint,” he explained, “young people have the chance to be masters and using force and violence becomes legitimate.”

Furer cites how his colleagues degraded and mercilessly beat a Palestinian dwarf for fun; how they had a “souvenir picture” taken with bloodied, bound civilians they’d thrashed; how one soldier pissed on the head of a Palestinian man because the latter had “the nerve to smile”; how another Palestinian was forced to stand on four legs and bark like a dog; and how another soldier who asked Palestinians for cigarettes and was refused, “broke someone’s hand” and “slashed their tires.”

Most chilling of all was Furer’s personal confession. “I ran toward [a group of Palestinians] and punched an Arab right in the face,” he admitted. “Blood was trickling from his lip onto his chin. I led him up behind the Jeep and threw him in, his knees banged against the trunk and he landed inside.” Furer then went on to describe how he and his comrades stepped on the tightly handcuffed captive, how they hit him until “he was bleeding and making a kind of puddle of blood and saliva;” how Furer “grabbed him by the hair and turned his head to the side” until he cried aloud, and how the soldiers then “stepped harder and harder on his back,” to make him stop crying.

All of this was egged on by the company commander’s cheers of “Good work, tigers.” After they took their prey to their camp, the abuse continued. “All the other soldiers were waiting there to see what we’d caught,” Furer recalled. “When we came in with the Jeep, they whistled and applauded wildly.” One of the soldiers “went up to him and kicked him in the stomach. The Arab doubled over and grunted, and we all laughed. It was funny . . . I kicked him really hard in the ass and he flew forward just as I’d expected. They shouted . . . and laughed . . . and I felt happy. Our Arab was just a 16-year-old mentally retarded boy.”

As savage as it is, checkpoint abuse is not unique. It fits perfectly well into the practice of viewing the Palestinians as relative humans not entitled to the dignity and respect that full humans deserve. At the height of Israel’s massive reoccupation of Palestinian

cities in 2002, for example, soldiers used their knives to engrave the Star of David on the arms of a number of detained Palestinian men and teenage boys. The haunting pictures of the victims were first shown on Arab satellite TV channels and eventually exposed on the internet.

In the same year, at al-Amari refugee camp, during a mass roundup of Palestinian males – teenagers and elderly included – Israeli troops inscribed identification numbers “on the foreheads and forearms of Palestinian detainees awaiting interrogation.” The late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat compared the act to well-known Nazi practices at concentration camps. Tommy Lapid was incensed, saying: “As a refugee from the Holocaust I find such an act insufferable.” Nonetheless, Raanan Gissin, a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, was only worried about Israel’s image being tarnished and told Israel army radio: “Clearly it conflicts with the desire to convey a public relations message.” Israel’s mainstream media outlets were also too concerned about the “public relations disaster” to express any abhorrence, let alone protest the act’s ironic immorality.

Yoram Peri, a professor of politics and media at Tel Aviv University, sees PR as “a fundamental issue in Israeli life.”

“We do not think we do anything wrong,” he suggested in an interview with *The Guardian*, “but we think we explain ourselves badly and that the international media is anti-Semitic . . . When we discuss the horrible things that happen in the West Bank, we don’t talk about the issue but about how it will be seen.”

In a recent interview with the Irish publication *Handstand*, former Knesset member Shulamit Aloni bemoaned this prevailing cynicism, apathy and acquiescence among the majority of Israelis. According to Aloni, a “gross insensitivity” now threatens the moral integrity of Israeli society. Referring to the Germans during the Nazi rule, she added, “I am beginning to understand why a whole nation was able to say: ‘We did not know.’”

Omar Barghouti is an independent political analyst based in Palestine.



Today, to speak about an Occupation is no longer adequate, because the domination of a whole people devoid of rights over such a long period (a period that is now longer than the time passed from the Balfour declaration to the establishment of Israel) has created a new regime in Israel-Palestine, a Jewish form of apartheid. It is not that Israel is a democracy with a certain problem called the West Bank and Gaza; it is rather the case that the Israeli apartheid regime contains a Jewish-democratic enclave. One cannot simply put an end to this situation with a series of political decisions. The entire regime must be deconstructed.

Adi Ophir, *Tikkun*, Nov./Dec. 2004



TOP: A young boy sits among the ruins of his home in Warsaw after it was destroyed during a German air raid, September 1939. BOTTOM: A Palestinian boy looks at the ruins of a house destroyed by Israeli bulldozers at the Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip, November 2001

BOYCOTT

BACK IN THE SUMMER OF 2001, AN OIL PAINTING by Marc Chagall mysteriously disappeared from a New York museum. It was no ordinary art heist: museum officials soon received a letter stating that the painting would be returned – as soon as peace was established between Israelis and Palestinians. Thankfully, the painting was returned to the museum after being abandoned in a post office, the thief having realized that his or her methods would not achieve the desired outcome. On a more realistic level, what nonviolent strategies can lead to a just settlement of this one-hundred-year-old conflict?

Despite decades of international effort, Israel's leaders remain unwilling to address the root cause of the longstanding conflict: the occupation and colonization of Palestinian lands in defiance of international law. With western governments unwilling or unable to break the impasse, the only power capable of applying the necessary pressure is civil society.

Such reasoning underpins the international boycott campaigns currently gaining momentum in Europe and North America. In December 2004, some 270 academics attended a conference at the School of African and Oriental Studies in London to plan the next phase of a comprehensive academic boycott of Israel. Responding to a call from Palestinian academics and intellectuals who have witnessed their educational institutions disrupted, vandalized, and even closed by the Israeli military, the new boycott campaign calls on academics to refrain from all academic and cultural cooperation with Israeli institutions and to promote economic divestment (or "dis-investment") from Israel. As Lawrence Davidson, an American Jewish professor of Middle East history, told delegates: "Governments in the West, left to themselves, do not have the will to sanction Israel for its illegal occupation of the occupied territories and its violent destruction of Palestinian society. Therefore, an international grassroots movement must be organized to educate significant parts of the Western populations on the nature of Israeli behavior, and simultaneously build pressure on Israel to change its ways, and governments to act to encourage this change."

The divestment movement is making inroads in churches, towns and on university campuses, with

many supporters drawing inspiration from the successful cultural, economic and sporting boycott that contributed to ending apartheid in South Africa.

In mid-2004, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) passed a resolution to explore the potential of "selective divestment" of its \$8-billion portfolio from corporations that profit from Israel's occupation. Among the best-known in that category is Caterpillar, which sells Israel the weaponized bulldozers responsible for demolishing thousands of Palestinian homes, leaving tens of thousands homeless. The Presbyterian initiative followed an exploratory mission where church leaders witnessed first-hand the devastation in the occupied territories. They were particularly disturbed by the destruction caused by the "separation barrier" which cuts Palestinians off from their agricultural land, water supplies and community services such as hospitals and schools.

Rather than divesting from all Israel-related stocks, the PCUSA has chosen to target those corporations that violate human rights. While the Jewish Voice for Peace praised the church's divestment exploration as being "in the best Judeo-Christian tradition of supporting universal human rights and justice," the Presbyterians also received a letter in November 2004 threatening to burn down their churches with the congregants inside.

Nevertheless, the Episcopal Church USA and some individual United Methodist and United Church of Christ congregations have announced plans to consider their own divestment campaigns. More than 40 university campuses across the United States have active divestment campaigns, which began at the University of California at Berkeley in 2000, and a handful of American municipal governments have begun debating the merits of divestment.

South Africa's former archbishop Desmond Tutu has compared the situation for Palestinians under occupation with life under apartheid. Debating the merits of divestment, he concluded, "If apartheid ended, so can this occupation, but the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in this direction."

Deborah Campbell

SOME GHOSTS COME FROM THE AFTERLIFE
SOME SEND YOU THERE.

STUPID ONCE

After 9/11, the whole world showered Americans with heartfelt sympathy and was ready to join the US in a broad-based response to al Qaeda. President Bush could have used this political capital to win his war against terror in a "speak softly and carry a big stick" manner. Instead, he overreacted big time, turned Osama into a super hero and then proceeded to systematically piss off a large portion of humanity with his arrogant "You're either for me or against me" swagger - one of the biggest strategic blunders in geopolitical history.



...related and you are here to keep the... piece"
...this is the new Ghost Recon team. ... The last line.
...operating with the weapons and technology ... tomorrow on the border
...the fate of the world. This is the future of warfare yet to happen. This is now.

EXCLUSIVE GAME DESIGN
FOR PLAYSTATION 2

STUPID TWICE

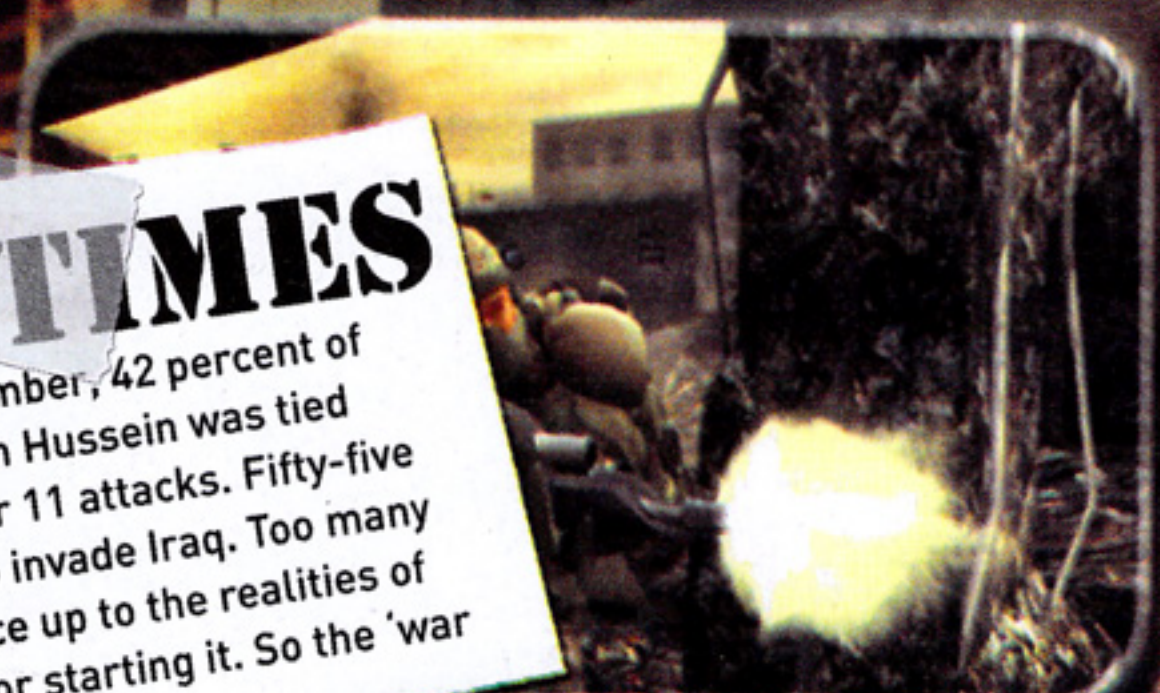
Sloppy, self-serving intelligence provided by Iraqi exiles eyeing Iraq's presidency gave President Bush fraudulent justification for invading the country. None of the chief architects of the war had any military service, but that didn't stop them from drawing up optimistic battle plans over the objections of senior Pentagon staffers who have actually experienced the trenches firsthand. The war was supposed to be over by now and Iraqis were supposed to embrace their "liberators." Wrong on both counts.

STUPID 3 TIMES

Leading up to the election last November, 42 percent of Americans still thought that Saddam Hussein was tied up with al Qaeda and the September 11 attacks. Fifty-five percent still believed it was right to invade Iraq. Too many Americans are simply unable to face up to the realities of the war and the dubious reasons for starting it. So the 'war president' gets four more years.



Direct laser-guided air strikes to eradicate dug-in enemy positions



Sound corners with the camera-equipped M29 rifle



Fast-paced, bone-crunching multiplayer action
up to 16 players online

Clancy's

HOST RECON 2



BRING IT ON CORRUPTION AMERICAN STYLE

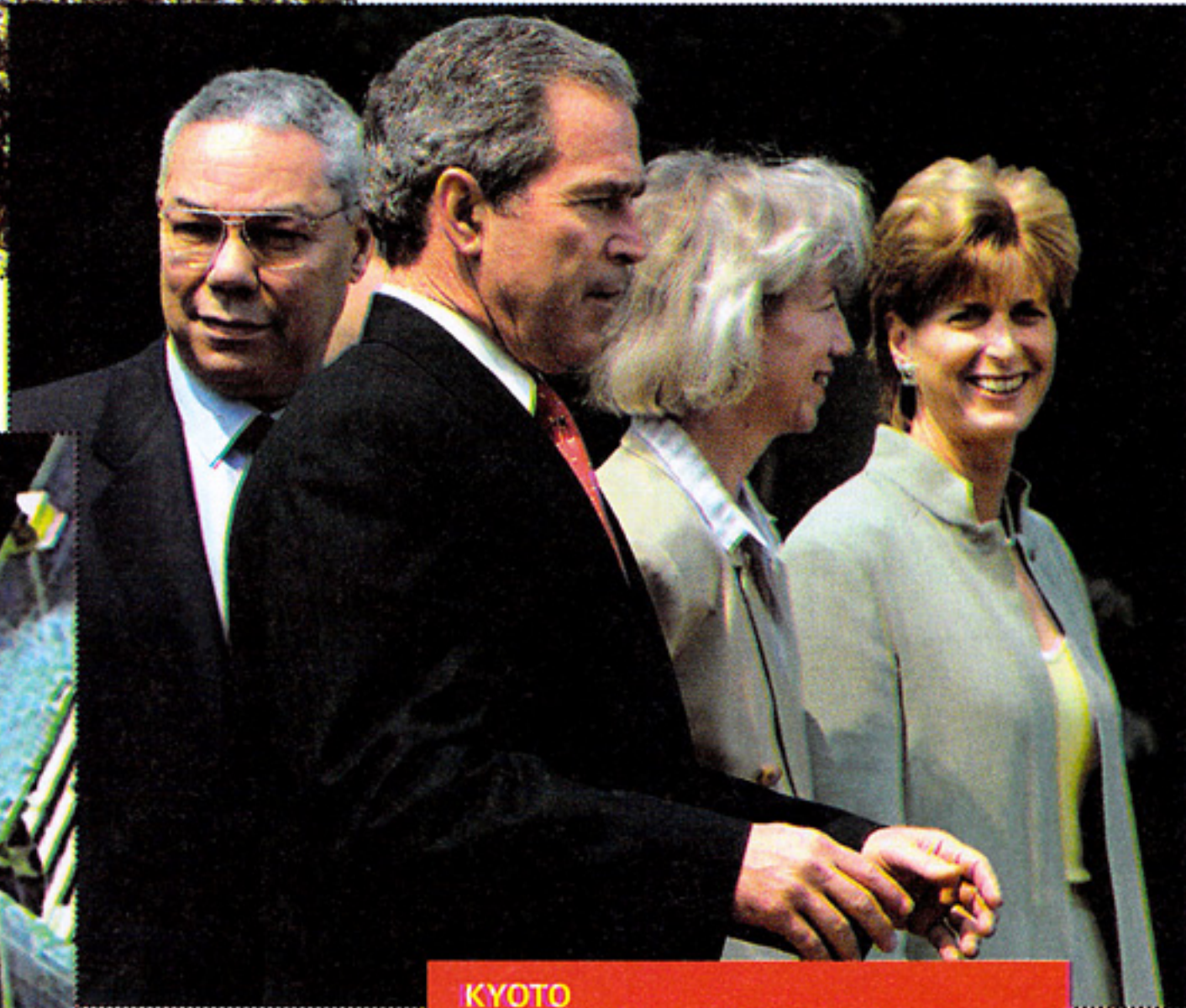
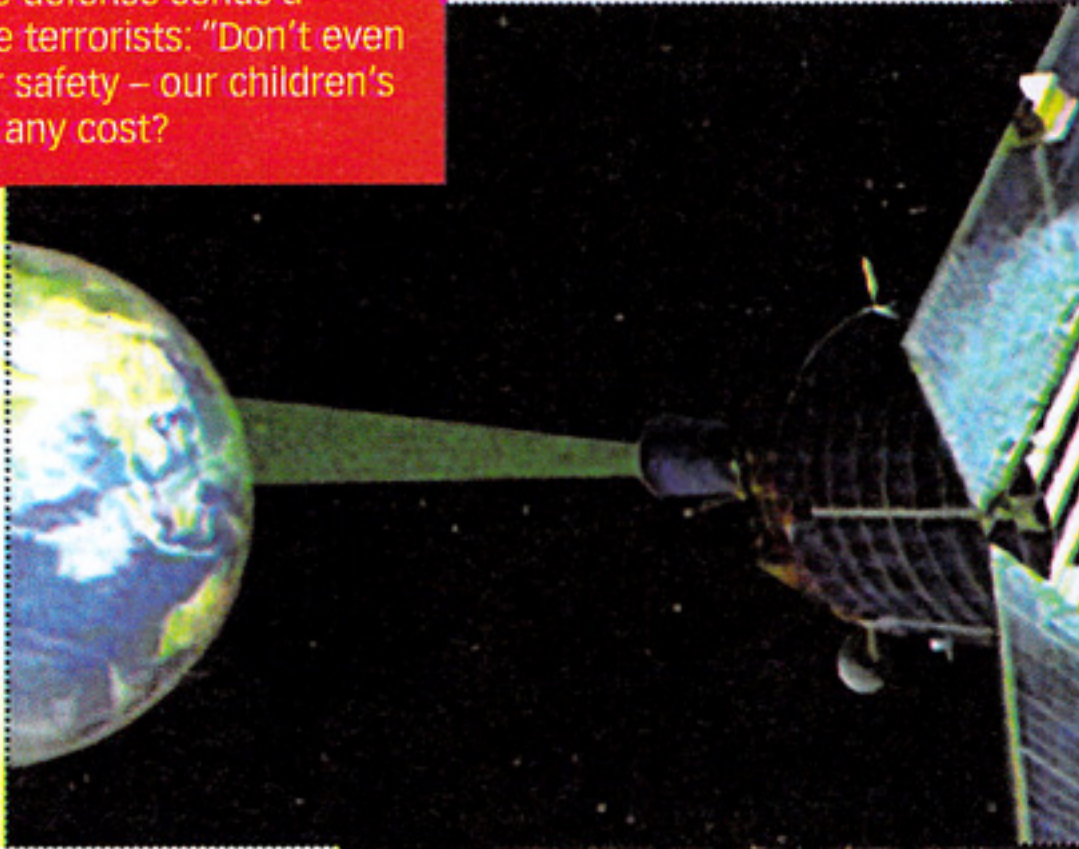


AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES

Free trade is well and good, but American interests have to come first. The rule is simple: if you don't like our trade policy, take your business elsewhere. And good luck finding a market as robust.

WEAPONS IN SPACE

Ballistic-missile defense sends a message to the terrorists: "Don't even try it." Isn't our safety – our children's safety – worth any cost?



KYOTO

The global temperature is rising. Sure. Is that any reason to throw water on the most dynamic economy in history?



UN

We underwrite the UN's budget, and what do we get? A grab-bag of dictators and socialists telling us what to do.

THERE'S NO CORRUPTION IN AMERICA. THERE'S only "bad optics." When the dictator of Zimbabwe ignores his judiciary to confiscate land that he then doles out to friends and family – that's corruption. When the US administration in Iraq awards a no-bid, open-ended contract to the company that was headed by Dick Cheney until he became vice president – that's "bad optics."

Corruption comes in a variety of guises. Wherever it occurs, it diminishes public confidence in political institutions and decision makers; it undermines the rule of law and stifles honest ambition. In the simplest terms, corruption is the abuse of authority for personal gain – but too narrow a definition runs the risk of oversimplification. For what term better describes a political culture that is greased with a sordid mixture of arm-twisting, cronyism and deceit?

Consider the government of the United States. There's no corruption there, remember – only "leverage." In the realm of international affairs, US hegemony depends on financial coercion as much as on military might. In his memoirs, former US Secretary of State James Baker painted an ugly picture of US machinations at the UN when he described his work as "an intricate process of cajoling, extracting, threatening and occasionally buying votes." Indeed, three days after Yemen voted

against the 1990 UN resolution to initiate the first Gulf War, the US rescinded its entire \$70-million aid package to the country. American diplomats had less success twisting arms in the buildup to their country's second skirmish with Saddam Hussein. Still, they were able to attract a few takers willing to send a handful of troops to Iraq in exchange for financial and military aid. One Estonian told *The New York Times* that his country's participation in the coalition of the willing is "like an investment for us." Most Estonians oppose the war in Iraq, but recognize the expediency of being in Uncle Sam's corner.

Iraq represents an investment for the US as well. Long before Bush's stated reasons for invading the country were discredited, critics drew attention to the potential for war profiteering. Certainly Bush and Cheney's friends in the energy sector have benefited from the war. We may never know the full extent to which Big Oil and the White House conspire, but the administration's vigilant refusal to disclose the details of Cheney's 2001 Task Force on Energy meeting is as sure a sign as any that they have something to hide.

A comparison between the reconstruction of Iraq and the Marshall Plan that helped post-war Europe get back on its feet reveals telling differences. Marshall's plan was developed after months of congressional debate, its priorities were



US IN IRAQ

America sacrificed its sons and daughters to liberate Iraq. Our soldiers didn't die to save the oil fields for Russia, France and China.



ICC

Who will judge America? Americans themselves. And the World Court can go to hell.



HALLIBURTON

Yes, America's vice president used to be the boss of Halliburton and it got the contract to rebuild Iraq. So what? It makes sense to run with a winner.

determined by Europe rather than the US, and it was administered independently of the White House. In contrast, the mission to rebuild Iraq was a pet-project of the Bush administration orchestrated without any input from Congress. It is marked by a closed bidding process, US control of Iraqi oil revenues, and strong-arm tactics to ensure a fully privatized and deregulated economy that is open to foreign control. In the words of *The Economist*, a "capitalist dream."

The situation in Iraq is a product of the culture of Washington. And Americans are not prepared to see corruption – what they see is "business as usual." So, few were surprised by George Bush's 2005 inauguration fundraising scheme, which granted access to the president's ear for anyone who could write a six-figure check. An "exclusive lunch" with Bush, Cheney, and 19 friends cost a mere \$250,000. An "elegant" candlelight dinner also graced by the president cost \$100,000.

Meanwhile, the US capital has been taken over by thousands of lobbyists clamoring to influence policy. Many of them are former public officials who become shills for corporate interests once they leave office. But that's not conflict-of-interest – it's "a foot in the door." It's the reason that Neil Bush can hustle up a \$2-million contract to advise a Chinese semiconductor manufacturer even though he has

admitted under oath that he has "absolutely no educational background in semiconductors."

He does, however, have a brother in the Oval Office.

As for the legislators themselves, they are beholden to the financial interests that fund their campaigns. They attach pork-barrel projects to unrelated appropriations bills to make sure they won't be debated, and dream up myriad tax breaks and subsidies for their funders. And while the White House pressures foreign governments to open their borders to free trade, it also protects American business through tariffs and barriers designed to hinder competing industries around the world. Science, too, has become an avenue to placate industry. The Bush administration distorts and suppresses scientific findings that are inconsistent with its objectives and stacks government advisory boards with unqualified Republican scientists on the corporate payroll.

In Washington, it seems, the line between business and state grows grayer by the day. As Bill Moyers has noted, "When you marry the power of the state with the power of business . . . you are creating a spectacle of corruption." But surely he didn't mean to say "corruption." What he meant to say was "responsible government."

Nicholas Klassen

BEING A SOLDIER IN AN ARMY OF ONE



AN ARMY OF ONE

WHAT'S YOUR PRICE?

Lately the US government can't seem to entice Americans to take up arms. This booklet has cropped up at recruiting offices across the country, promising rich rewards in scholarships and benefits. Bonuses of up to \$15,000 are being offered to anyone willing to sign up for the National Guard and Army Reserve. What do you say? Is \$15,000 worth dying for?



Marlboro men kick butt in Fallujah

Blonde and blue-eyed, a handsome young man, the 20-year-old Marine from Appalachia, snapped after "more than twelve hours of nearly nonstop deadly combat." The media promptly dubbed him the "Marlboro man," a name commentators took up with unreflective glee. News anchor Dan Rather described Miller's image as that of "a warrior with his eyes on the far horizon, scanning for danger."

FULL STORY: PAGES 6-7

WHAT MAKES AN IMAGE ICONIC? AT WHAT POINT does a photograph shift from straightforward physical representation into the realm of the symbolic? Who, finally, determines what that symbol represents? This is a photograph of one James Blake Miller, a 20-year-old Marine from Appalachia, snapped after "more than twelve hours of nearly nonstop deadly combat." The media promptly dubbed him the "Marlboro man," a name commentators took up with unreflective glee. News anchor Dan Rather described Miller's image as that of "a warrior with his eyes on the far horizon, scanning for danger."

Miller was bewildered by the ensuing media frenzy, not to mention the way his dangling cigarette seemed

to give this image its final heroic thrust in the minds of Americans. "Tell Marlboro I'm down to four packs," the three-pack-a-day smoker grouched to a reporter, "and I'm here in Fallujah till who knows when." In chatrooms across the country, devoted fans subsequently vowed to send the jonesing soldier all the Marlboros he can smoke. It seems probable the cigarette's manufacturer would have rushed to do the same – if only out of sheer gratitude for what has to be its best publicity in decades. Who at Philip Morris could have anticipated the Marlboro Man – that moldering icon of American virility – would get such a vitalizing makeover? Smoking, like war itself, is back in style.



So...

AWFUL THINGS HAPPENED DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. American soldiers raped women and girls, tortured prisoners, and in the case of My Lai, even wiped out an entire village. From the air, US jets dropped conventional bombs and doused the landscape with napalm and herbicides like Agent Orange. At the conclusion of it all, 3 million Vietnamese had died.

Q. And babies?



A. And babies.

what have we learned?

Today, awful things are happening in Iraq. US cluster bombs have wiped out bustling markets. Soldiers have killed innocent Iraqis at checkpoints and in house raids. Interrogators have abused and likely killed prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Other atrocities have yet to be disclosed. And US officials insist that keeping track of Iraqi casualties is not their concern.

So they can casually dismiss a study indicating that the invasion has resulted in 100,000 Iraqi deaths, while offering no alternative figure themselves.

The Vietnamese wanted to be left alone to sort out a nationalist struggle that had nothing to do with the US. Now, Iraqis want the US to leave them alone as well.



U.S. NAVY

The US invasion of Iraq has killed an estimated 100,000 people, over 50 percent of them women and children. Yet, it's the videos of pleading Western hostages we'll remember, because the victims resemble us.

ARABIYA
CLUSIVE

العربية



Afraid to look in the moral abyss

BOSTON

Why don't we Americans look directly at the war? We avert our gaze, knowing that the situation in Iraq grows more desperate by the day. Vaunted "coalition" efforts to "break the back" of the "insurgency" have only strengthened it. The violence among Iraqis would surely qualify as civil war - except that only one side is fighting. The structures of relief and repair are gone. Whole cities are destroyed, populations displaced. The hope of Iraqi elections is mortally compromised. "Coalition" members are dropping out. The mission of American force is to secure the country, but it can't secure itself. The performance of US intelligence has been consistent: Its strategic failures caused the war, and its tactical ignorance of the enemy is losing the war.

Meanwhile, in America, this, the gravest foreign policy crisis in a generation, source of a crisis of conscience for tens of millions of citizens, is not a subject of political debate. For many months, overt opposition to the war was sublimated in the effort to defeat George W. Bush in the November election. John Kerry's fatal ambivalence about Iraq sealed the war off from the great quadrennial decision, with the result that the voices of those who hated the war were muted, and the uneasiness of those who were troubled by it was never addressed.

Astoundingly, the Democrats cooperated with the Republicans in assuring that the war in Iraq - the one thing that might have defeated Bush - was not an issue. That marginalization of the anti-war impulse continues in the suspended animation of a period after the American election and before the Iraqi election.

The new Bush administration has moved to reconfigure itself in most ways but one. The president's affirmation of Secretary of Defense

Donald Rumsfeld, in combination with his naming of Condoleezza Rice as secretary of state, reflects a blind determination to "stay the course" in Iraq, never mind that the course is heading off a cliff.

The main US news media treat the "story" of Iraq as if it is a morality tale about 20-year-old Americans - a few of whom are shown making bad choices, but most of whom are lionized as heroes. When their deaths are mourned on television each night - that heartbreaking silence under those

The deaths only deepen the paralysis of the American public, which can only look away.

smiling commissary snapshots - the effect is to deepen the paralysis of the American public, which can only look away.

The barbarity of the Iraqi insurgency has been a particular source of repugnance. First it was hostage-taking, and beheading - low-tech "shock and awe" assaults aimed at "foreigners," precisely to terrorize their sponsoring populations. The apparent murder of the admirable Margaret Hassan, war-opponent and humanitarian worker, was especially deplorable.

Then it was systematic attacks on Iraqis themselves, anyone daring to cooperate with the "coalition" occupiers. The execution-style murders of Iraqi police recruits and soldiers in recent weeks has been chilling, and now workers on a bus are massacred. What makes these tactics so appalling is their intensely personal character.

But it takes a disciplined imagination to acknowledge that the less personal

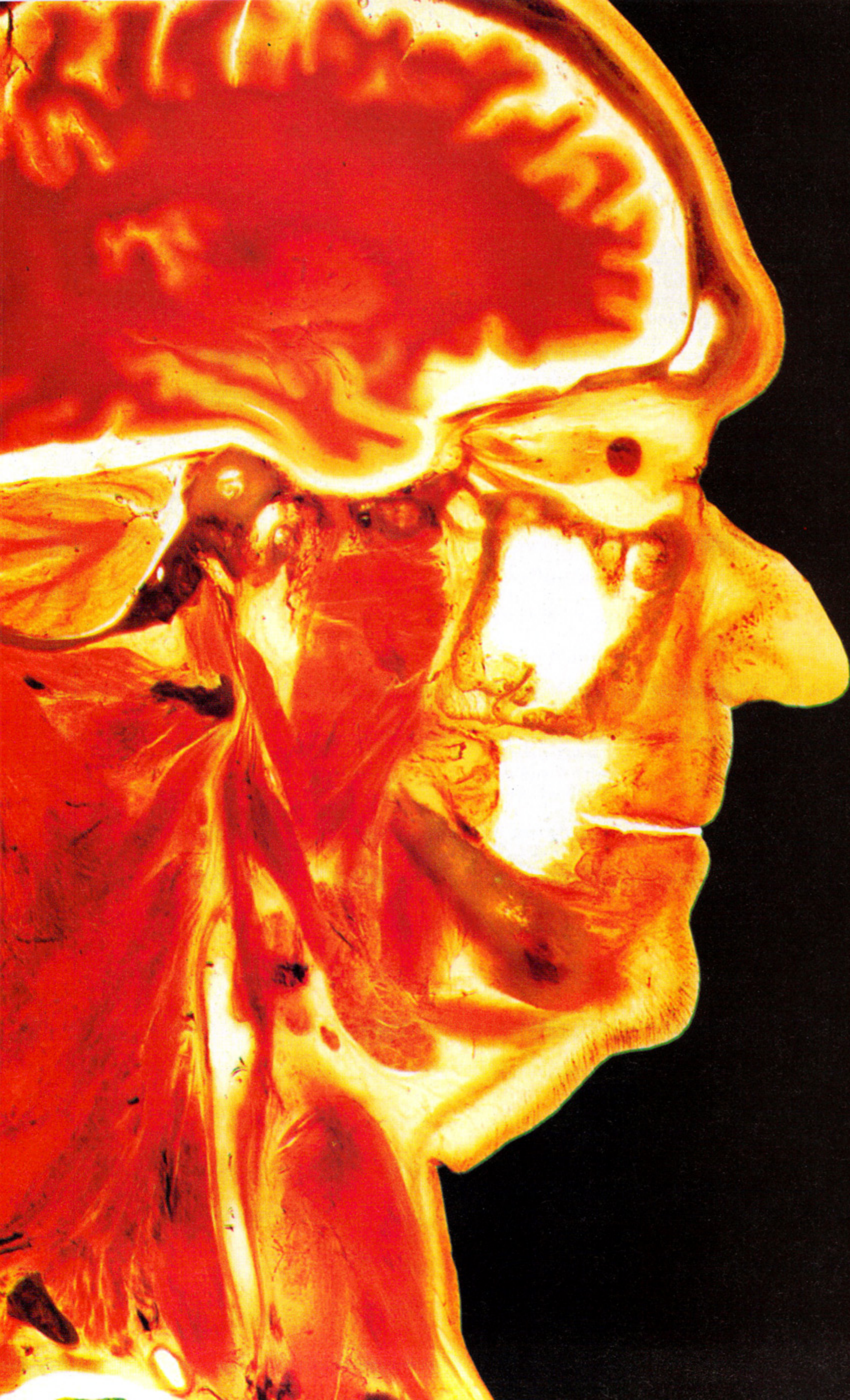
savageries of bombs, missiles, artillery, and heavy weapons are, to those blown to smithereens, also barbaric. The main horror of what the "coalition" is doing is not a matter of the occasional soldier who, in the heat of battle, commits a war crime, but the steady destruction rained on cities, villages, the Iraqi people. This violence is wreaked calmly, from a distance, within the rules of engagement.

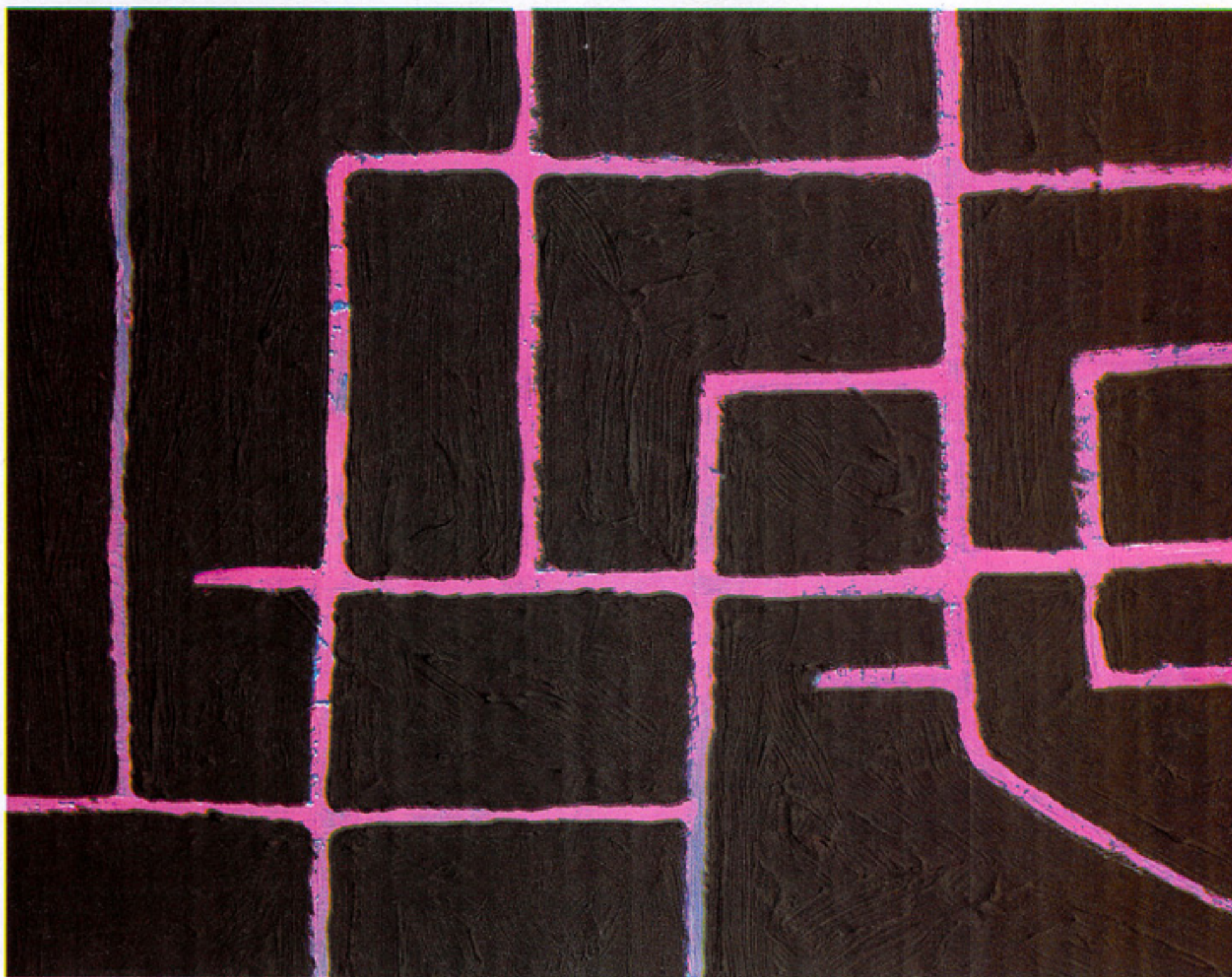
The war itself is the American war crime. But that is lost in the "normalcy" of the news.

On the other side, it is the proliferation of suicide-bombing that has come to seem normal. Soldiers commonly risk their lives for nation, honor, or buddy - but they will not kill themselves with forethought, in large numbers, except for the most transcendent of reasons. The United States has given itself an enemy that shows by its central tactic that it is fighting for God.

Americans, meanwhile, are so confused about religion that we have just been through an election in which "religious values" were defined as key, but precisely in ways that kept the war out of the discussion. America's purpose in Iraq is a compound of such deflection, self-deception, half-measures, and shallow thinking. The opposition, meanwhile, is absolute and unblinking. That difference partly answers the question with which this column began, but mainly we avert our eyes because the war is a moral abyss. If we dare to look, as Nietzsche said, the abyss stares back.

James Carroll is an author and columnist with the Boston Globe, where this article first appeared.





The brain – what's it for?
Is it a rational machine; the
greatest calculator in all of
creation? Or is it a device
designed – intentionally or
not – for creating meaning?



CAN SCIENCE SOLVE THE RIDDLE OF EXISTENCE?

IS SCIENCE ON THE VERGE OF EXPLAINING THE mystery of existence once and for all? Some prominent scientists are suggesting as much. They claim that unified theories of physics, when combined with refined versions of the big bang model, will soon bequeath us a so-called "theory of everything." As described by physicists such as Stephen Hawking, a theory of everything will be a kind of mystical revelation, which permanently transforms the "Hunh?" of wonder evoked in us by our contemplation of nature into a great "Aha!"

Those who find this vision of a wonderless world chilling rather than exhilarating should be assured that it will never be fulfilled. One of the great paradoxes of modern science is that the more it tells about the origin and history of the cosmos and of life on Earth and of Homo sapiens, the more mysterious our existence becomes.

The big bang theory represents a profound insight into the history and structure of the cosmos, but it cannot tell us why creation occurred in the first place. Particle physics suggests that empty space is seething with "virtual particles," which spring into existence for an instant before vanishing; in the same way, some physicists speculate, the entire universe might have begun as a kind of virtual particle.

Honest physicists will admit that they have absolutely no idea why there is something rather than nothing. After all, what produced the quantum forces that supposedly made creation possible? "No one is certain what happened before the Big Bang, or even if the question has any meaning," the physicist and Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg writes.

Next question: Why does the universe look this way rather than some other way? Why does it adhere to these laws of nature rather than to some other laws? Altering any of the universe's fundamental parameters would have radically altered reality. For example, if the universe had been slightly more dense at its inception, it would have rapidly stopped expanding and collapsed into a black hole. If the universe had been a smidgeon less dense, it would have flown apart so rapidly that there would have been no chance for stars, galaxies and planets to form. Cosmologists sometimes call this the fine-tuning problem, or, more colorfully, the Goldilocks dilemma: How did the density of the universe turn out not too high, or too low, but just right?

The odds that matter would have precisely its observed density, the physicist Lawrence Krauss has calculated, are as great as the odds of guessing precisely how many atoms there are in the sun. Some physicists are so troubled by the arbitrariness of the cosmos that they espouse a quasi-theological concept known as the anthropic principle. According to the anthropic principle, the universe must have the structure we observe, because otherwise we wouldn't be here to observe it.

The anthropic principle actually comes in two forms, weak and strong. The weak anthropic principle, or WAP, holds merely that any cosmic observer will observe conditions, at least locally, that make the observer's existence possible. The strong anthropic principle, SAP, insists that the universe must be constructed in such a way so as to make observers possible. WAP is tautological and SAP teleological. As the physicist Tony Rothman has noted, the anthropic principle in any form is completely ridiculous and hence should be called CRAP. The anthropic principle is cosmology's version of creationism.

The next improbability is life. The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins opened his book *The Blind Watchmaker* by declaring that life "is a mystery no longer," because Darwin solved it with his theory of evolution by natural selection. Dawkins is not a silly man, but this is a silly thing to say. Life is as mysterious as ever, in spite of all the insights provided by evolutionary theory and more modern biological paradigms such as genetics and molecular biology. Neither Darwinism nor any other scientific theory tells us why life appeared on Earth in the first place or whether this event was probable or a once-in-eternity fluke.

Many scientists have argued that life must be a ubiquitous phenomenon that pervades the universe, but they can offer precious little empirical evidence to support this assertion. After decades of searching, scientists have found no signs of life elsewhere in the universe; a 1996 report of fossilized microbes in a meteorite from Mars turned out to be erroneous. Researchers still cannot make matter animate in the laboratory, even with all the tools of modern biotechnology.

In fact, the more scientists ponder life's origin, the harder it is to imagine how it occurred. Francis

Crick, the co-discoverer of the double helix, once declared that "the origin of life appears to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have to be satisfied to get it going." In his book *Life Itself*, Crick speculated that the seeds of life might have been planted on Earth by an alien civilization.

Once life on Earth started evolving, many scientists have contended, it was only a matter of time before natural selection produced a species as intelligent as *Homo sapiens*. But for more than 80 percent of life's 3.5-billion-year history, the Earth's biota consisted entirely of single-celled organisms, such as bacteria and algae; in other words, not even the simplest multi-cellular organisms – jellyfish or sea squirts – were inevitable.

The evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould estimated that if the great experiment of life were re-run a million times over, chances are that it would never again give rise to mammals, let alone mammals intelligent enough to invent negative theology and television. Similar reasoning led the evolutionary theorist Ernst Mayr to conclude that SETI – the search for extraterrestrial intelligence program, which scans the heavens for radio signals from other civilizations – is futile.

Multiply all these improbabilities and they spike to infinity. "The more the universe seems comprehensible," Steven Weinberg once wrote, "the more it seems pointless." My analysis of science suggests a corollary aphorism: The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems improbable. The most wildly improbable feature of the universe is the lump of matter that can fret over its improbability.

Some researchers nonetheless insist that science will soon solve the riddle of existence, once and for all. For example, more than a decade before I argued in *The End of Science* that science's grand quest to uncover the basic rules governing reality might be reaching an impasse, the British chemist Peter Atkins wrote: "Fundamental science may be almost at an end, and might be completed within a generation." But whereas I saw science leaving many riddles unresolved, Atkins envisioned science as a universal acid dissolving all mysteries, including spiritual, ethical, and philosophical ones. "Complete knowledge is just within our grasp," he intoned. "Comprehension is moving across the face of the Earth, like the sunrise."

I suspected Atkins of rhetorical excess until I met him at a reception in London in 1997. As we sipped white wine from plastic cups, Atkins assured me with almost demonic glee that science would soon provide such satisfying explanations for all of nature's mysteries – including the supreme riddle of the universe's origin – that wonder would be extinguished forever, and along with it all of our silly spiritual superstitions and speculations. The world would be as solved as Fermat's last theorem: QED.

Other scientists acknowledge that science will never – can never – dispel our awe before the mystery of existence; in fact, science relies on awe for inspiration at least as much as religion does. "Our sense of wonder grows exponentially: the greater the knowledge, the deeper the mystery," wrote the evolutionary biologist Edward Wilson. "This catalytic reaction, seemingly an inborn human trait, draws us perpetually forward in a search for new places and new life."

Scientists may still go much further in plumbing nature's secrets. They may decipher the neural code, the secret language of the brain. They may arrive at a plausible explanation of how life emerged on Earth, and they may even discover life elsewhere in the universe. They may find and verify a unified theory of physics, which provides a more precise picture of the origin and history of the universe. Although there are good reasons for doubting such scientific advances, they cannot be ruled out. What can be ruled out is that science will answer the ultimate question: How did something come from nothing? Neither superstring theory nor any other of science's so-called theories of everything can resolve that mystery any more than our supernatural theologies can.

I do not believe in miracles, at least not defined in the conventional religious manner as divine disruptions of the natural order. But if a miracle is defined as an infinitely improbable phenomenon, then our existence is a miracle, which no theory natural or supernatural will ever explain.

John Horgan has written about science for Scientific American, Discover and The New York Times. His books include The End of Science, The Undiscovered Mind, and Rational Mysticism. He can be reached through www.johnhorgan.org.

EGGHEADS

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WERE THE PROGRESSIVES, the earnest reformers who sought to bring science and expertise to the problems of a newly urbanizing America. Their spirit begat the New Deal and its embrace of Keynes and economic “science,” through which experts would manage the economy on behalf of ordinary people, even though they didn’t know exactly what was going on.

Then came the Adlai Stevenson campaigns of 1952 and 1956, which cast the “egghead” stamp forever on liberals, in contrast to Republican “Ike” Eisenhower and his pedestrian Main Street ways. Democrats used to be the party of the people. Now they were the intellectuals who spoke for the people, from on high.

That spirit begat, more recently, the bevy of books making fun of Presidents Reagan and Bush Jr. for their factual and syntactical lapses. Then, in the fullness of time, came candidate John Kerry, and what may have been the signature utterance of his presidential campaign: “We must not let ideology get in the way of science.”

Kerry was invoking President Bush’s restrictions on stem cell research as a cultural Rorschach. He also was trying to make a ringing declaration of principle, and thereby refute suspicions that he didn’t have any. In the process he showed that he really didn’t have a clue. Does he really not grasp that science itself is an ideology – a religion really – especially as he had invoked it? Are we really not permitted to raise principled – even “ideological” – objections to what scientists want to do? Do the experts really always know best?

I say Bush deserves some credit. Agree with them or not, his restrictions were perhaps the one time he has chosen principle over market greed. (The biotech lobby is not small.) His grounds – the use of fetuses in stem cell research – are not ones I myself find compelling. But how many times in this country do we pause and reflect before plunging ahead with a new technology, especially when a whole industry is salivating with dreams of patent lucre?

Just look at what happened in California this fall. Voters here passed a ballot measure – Prop. 71 – that will give \$3 billion of taxpayer money to the biotech industry for stem cell research. For many it was a way to stick it to Bush; Move-On endorsed the measure. Now Californians find themselves footing the bill for a honey pot from which the biotech

establishment largely will dole out money to itself, with little public input or oversight.

I know, I know, the miracle cures. If they ever come. But why should industry get the patents, when we taxpayers are fronting the money and taking the risks? That’s conscripted venture capitalism. More importantly, what about the big questions that a measure like this brings forth? Let’s grant the most euphoric of biotech claims. Let’s say that stem cell research and the like will cure all diseases and double the span of life, or even end death entirely.

What then? Is it good to have no problems? Is it good never to die? It sounds like a recipe for utter boredom and depression. Yes we want to cure cancer and other vicious diseases. But who decides what a “disease” is, and what diseases the research will seek to cure?

Progressives, in their embrace of “science,” end up with much the same world view as the advertising industry. Happiness means always getting what you want. Not long ago I interviewed Dr. Leon Kass – chair of the President’s Council on Bioethics. Kass has been much reviled in the leftish journals. Yet it was one of the most interesting interviews I have done. We talked among other things about whether it is good to be able to choose the gender of a child. Progressives approach a question like that as one of safety – ask the scientists again. Or else it’s about equity. Maybe people won’t choose girls, or the poor won’t get to choose at all.

Those are genuine concerns. But maybe the question goes deeper. Maybe what we really need is to learn to love a child that is not of the gender we thought we wanted. Maybe the biotech future – a future in which everyone has just what they want – is one in which nobody grows. They buy, but don’t grow. People brood about questions like this. But the left, by and large, does not address them. (Jacob Needleman, the philosopher, has used the apt term “metaphysically repressed.”) That leaves a vacuum that right wing religionists are only too happy to fill.

The Church of Science is, in the end, about authority. It is about whom people should have to listen to. When *The New York Times* quotes a psychiatrist, or a biochemist, or – holiest of holies – an economist, a reverential hush falls over the proceedings. This is authority speaking. When Alan Greenspan speaks, it’s the Latin Mass. Progressives argue largely by invoking such authority. Junk food

is bad because science says it is. Global warming exists because science says it does. All that is fine as far as it goes. But there is more to life than fact – more to truth than fact. Maybe it's bad for kids to think of food as oral recreation, and bad for all of us to put gunk into our neighbor's air regardless of whether scientists say it causes global warming or not.

When John Kerry said that we must not let "ideology stand in the way of science," he really was saying something about class. Brainy people are entitled to govern. The rest of us should just shut up and listen. Well, this just in. Not everyone likes to be told they have to listen to the experts. Not everyone liked the kids who were first in their high school class.

Jonathan Rowe

ART CONTRIBUTORS



Cover by:
LUKAS MEIER
Zug, Switzerland



CLIVE LANDAN
Title from the "Familiar British Wildlife" series
Newport UK



MARLENE DUMAS
Courtney the Frith Street Gallery
London England



MOISES SAMAN
From the book "This is War"
Courtesy Charta
Milano Italy



SONJA BRAAS
Title Forces#1, 2002
Courtesy the James Nicholson
Gallery
San Francisco



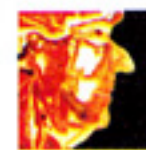
BETH YARNELLE EDWARDS
Dyanne, age 42 (dining room).
courtesy the Robert Kline Gallery
Boston



PETER MENZEL
From the series *Robosapiens*
courtesy Peter Menzel
Photography, Los Angeles



BRIAN ULRICH
Schaumburg, IL 2002
www.notifbutwhen.com



GUNTHER VON HAGEN
From the exhibition
Body Worlds
www.bodyworlds.com



STEVEN QUINN
Courtesy the artist
Belfast Ireland
<http://www.terra3.co.uk>



From the exhibit "Breaking
the Silence" Tel Aviv Israel.



LAUREN GREENFIELD
Title: "Ashley, Scott, CJ, Brando, Bree, and Corey hanging out at the 'Skinmarket' store in the Oaks Mall, Thousand Oaks CA" from series "Tween"
Courtesy the artist.
Venice, CA

THE GOD GENE

WHEN ASKED BY A JOURNALIST IF her liaison with Bill Clinton was sinful, Monica Lewinsky deftly replied: "I'm not very religious. I'm more spiritual." It has become a cliché to claim that you pursue spiritual depth free from the dogma and moralism of organized religions. Still, most people assume that religious faith and spiritual enlightenment are both dependent on the existence of a divine being or higher reality.

Not necessarily so, argues Dean Hamer, a Harvard-trained geneticist at the National Cancer Institute. In *The God Gene: How Faith is Hardwired into Our Genes*, Hamer claims that religious faith is a social habit we pick up from people around us. By contrast, the experience of self-transcendence (his stand-in for spirituality) is substantially determined by our genetic endowment. In fact, he contends that our ability to enter a spiritual state is a partially inherited trait,

similar to musical ability or athleticism.

If this is true, the advocates of materialism will have gained another foothold in religion's traditional territory. But there are reasons to distrust Hamer. For starters, he classifies his subjects' self-transcendence using a quiz with 20 true and false questions, such as "I love the blooming of flowers in the spring as much as seeing an old friend again." This is a dubious approximation of spirituality.

The "God gene" itself is suspicious. At one point Hamer admits that the gene – which affects the transport of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine – has a "marginally significant" linkage to test scores on his spirituality quiz. As many as 50 other genes, he writes, may have a greater impact. But by the next page he is back to trumpeting his discovery of the God gene. (In 1993

Hamer claimed to find a part of chromosome X that contains the "gay gene." Several research groups have tried and failed to reproduce his results.)

Hamer's book reads as an attempt to get on Oprah, rather than serious scientific or philosophical inquiry. But *The God Gene* raises interesting questions. Are spiritual epiphanies simply a feeling, like joy, or do they include ideas, such as a particular vision of the cosmos? Is there an evolutionary advantage to being spiritual? (Research on the health effects of prayer and meditation suggests there is.) Do religions build upon our intrinsic spiritual leanings, or do they pervert them?

You'll want to go beyond Hamer, not to mention Monica Lewinsky, for answers to these questions.

Chris Tenove

DIVINITY FOR THE REALITY-BASED COMMUNITY

Look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:18

It's not what you see that is art, art is the gap.

Marcel Duchamp

IN BORN-AGAIN AMERICA'S RENEWED CULTURE wars, it's a fair guess that contemporary art and mainstream religion won't end up on the same side.

Consider the teams. There are the defenders of Christian values whose perceptions of cutting-edge art are clouded by memories of Andre Serrano's pee-dunked crucifix, Robert Gober's Blessed Virgin with a culvert through her chest, and the dung-gobbed Mary by Chris Ofili that sent Rudy Giuliani through the roof. Then there are artists, people whose values of diversity and constant questioning make them unlikely bedfellows with evangelical Christians. But, just as the myth of red states and blue obscured a reality that's more purplish in hue, perhaps there's a place – somewhere between George W. and Gilbert & George – where spiritual seekers and artists can find common ground.

It's not such a long shot. Artists and spiritual searchers have long grappled with the same existential issues and shared the same sense of the sublime. English art critic Clive Bell linked aesthetic and religious rapture in 1914 when he wrote of "two roads by which men escape from circumstance to ecstasy," and Jean Cocteau once described de Chirico as "a painter of secular mystery." That mystery is evident in both how we discuss art and how we experience it. We refer to an artist's inspiration (literally, bringing in spirit), an object's animation (the imbuing with animus or soul), or the "leap of faith" prompted by an empty canvas. Duchamp's "gap" recognizes that art is the realm of transubstantiation – a mere object is transformed into a conveyor of profound meaning by the participation of its viewer.

The parallels between art and spirituality are many, if not overlapping: artists revel in the wonder of creation (Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral interventions in nature); artists suggest the kind of awareness Buddhist's seek (by focusing on soup cans, Andy Warhol suggests a reconsideration of the mundane); artists openly explore taboo subjects on

which religions have long ago rendered verdict (Joy Garnett's paintings of corpses and Marlene Dumas' sexually explicit portraits). But it's the social aspects of art that have such potential for bringing people together: Art can illuminate our interconnectedness.

In *Timequake*, writer Kurt Vonnegut explains why he pursues his artform: "Many people need desperately to hear this message, 'I feel and think much as you do, care about many of the things you care about, although most people don't care about them. You are not alone.'"

Witnessing is another social role of art that resonates with religious tradition. "Art is prophetic," says artist and former Trappist monk Ernesto Pujol in the book *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*. Artists can bear witness to injustice, delivering "messages the powerful may not care to hear." In the age of Jessica Lynch and Fox News, the world needs alternative reporting by the likes of Alfredo Jaar, whose famous photo series compared sky-high gold prices with the low wages and harsh conditions endured by Brazilian miners, or Picasso, whose *Guernica* recorded the horrific saturation bombing of an ancient Basque city. As the old Catholic hymn goes, "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do unto me;" on this count, many artists are keeping score.

Art, it seems, allows us to ponder the sacred in non-dogmatic terms – i.e., divinity for the reality-based community. Of course now is not the heyday for that bunch. But perhaps there's hope in what theologian Finley Eversole called a "spiritual underground." For him the term referred to a complex notion that artists who confront the emptiness of a godless world – writing in 1963, he was thinking of Rothko, Pollock, and de Kooning – connect us to the holy by presenting its inverse: "If our artists have been incapable of religious faith, they have at least shown us that modern man is incapable of *unfaith* [emphasis his]." But I suggest that artists make up a spiritual underground in a different sense. While many mainstream religions are being hijacked by rigid fundamentalists, contemporary artists make up a loose-knit band of the covertly spiritual. If artists of the "secular mystery" can create work that resists co-optation by religious and political ideologues, perhaps we can call on them in more enlightened times to reacquaint us with the joys of asking questions we don't yet have the answers for.

Paul Schmelzer





“Terrorism is the ultimate spectacle
for a tired jaded populace.”
Don Delillo



In 1968, at the height of the Vietnam War, which the Vietnamese call the American War, Lithuanian-born immigrant, Fluxus artist, and graphic designer George Maciunas made a large, red, white and blue foldout mailable poster entitled, “*USA Surpasses All Genocide Records!*” It offered a trenchant criticism of a brutal regime, and it was also a jab at the complacency of the creative class – artists, designers, critics, curators – in the face of that regime’s oppressions at home and abroad. The poster’s obvious target was Jasper Johns’s flag paintings, which caught Maciunas’s flak for their

concern with the preciousness of the art object at a time when millions were being killed, maimed, displaced, dispossessed and disenfranchised by those with this particular insignia sewn on their uniforms and emblazoned on their bombs. Maciunas replaced the stars on the flag with a field of skulls and crossbones. In lieu of red stripes he strung lines of text, statistics comparing America’s genocidal practices to those committed by the regimes we are trained to think of as history’s darkest:



KUBLAI KHAN MASSACRES 10% IN NEAR EAST
SPAIN MASSACRES 10% OF AMERICAN INDIANS
JOSEPH STALIN MASSACRES 5% OF RUSSIANS
NAZIS MASSACRE 5% OF OCCUPIED EUROPEANS AND 75% OF EUROPEAN JEWS
U.S.A. MASSACRES 6.5% OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE & 75% OF AMERICAN INDIANS
FOR CALCULATIONS AND REFERENCES, WRITE TO: P.O. BOX 180, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013

Chris Thompson

US MASSACRES 100,000 IN IRAQ



LAST NOVEMBER'S US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION had Europe seeing red. As state after state went Republican, folks in Paris, London and Berlin steeled themselves for another four years of George Bush, the Bible-quoting cowboy. Those Yankees really mean it when they say one nation under God. Old-time religion lurks behind their penchant for swords over ploughshares, for faith over proof, for individual action over collective debate. But it also gives them the bravura of a chosen people who have barely tasted persecution.

In exit polls, 22 percent of US voters named "moral values" the most pressing issue of the day, versus the economy (20 percent) and terrorism (19 percent). Three-quarters of Americans call themselves Christian. And here's a figure that will get European eyes rolling: a 2003 Gallup poll showed that 68 percent of the US public believes in the devil.

Meanwhile, the churches of world-weary Europe sit empty. Yes, America has its problems right now, but Europeans suffer from a malaise all their own – and they're not exactly reaching out to God for answers. In a 2002 survey by the Pew Global

Attitudes Project, just 21 percent of German and 11 percent of French citizens said that religion was very important to them. At 33 and 27 percent, respectively, the UK and Italy wandered slightly closer to the straight and narrow.

According to US author Jeremy Rifkin, religiosity lies at the heart of the difference between America and Europe. In his new book, *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, Rifkin presents the US value system as a cryogenic wonder.

By fusing together two disparate European streams of thought – the waning Reformation and the burgeoning Enlightenment – the architects of the American republic created a societal ideal in which everyone stands before God as an individual, free to pursue his or her own material happiness. The perfect ethos for conquering an untamed frontier (never mind all those Native people), it's remained deep-frozen to this day.

"The American Dream is indistinguishable from our religious beliefs," says Rifkin from Washington, DC, where he is president of the Foundation on



Economic Trends. "A majority of Americans believe God shines His grace on our shores, that we are an exception, that America is the Promised Land, that God looks out for America. That's why the American Dream is so optimistic, because if people believe that God is on our side, then you're willing to take risks and be optimistic about the future."

And Europe? Not so much. Rifkin explains that the European sense of individualism has been tempered by centuries of communal living, closely overseen by the Catholic Church and the feudal aristocracy. The result is a market-based social economy. "The American Dream puts its faith in God and country. The European Dream puts its faith in social rights, a welfare system and a civil society."

After 1,000 years of killing each other, after the Holocaust and two world wars, Europeans no longer see violence as a solution. Compare that with the US. "If you believe in literal evil, and the majority of Americans do," Rifkin observes, "you can't compromise. You need a strong military and a just military hand. Americans believe you have to have the righteous might on your side."

Meanwhile, Rifkin says, the American Dream is fading. According to the OECD, the US now leads industrialized countries in income disparity. Still, an increasingly desperate American public continues to hope beyond hope. "We'd rather have a lousy dream than no dream, even though the dream is 200 years old and doesn't fit a globally connected world."

Rifkin believes 455 million Europeans are in the midst of a social experiment far more audacious than anything hatched by America's founding fathers. The European Dream, he says with guarded admiration, is "the first attempt in all of history to create a global consciousness."

Rifkin points out the great irony that contemporary European values – inclusivity, sustainable development, quality of life, peace, universal human rights – are more Christian than America's guiding principles. "If Christ were to come back today, he'd be much more comfortable in Europe than he would in the heartland of America." In a secular Europe, those are fighting words.

Nick Rockel

The formidable influence of the religious drive is based on far more than just the validation of morals. A great subterranean river of the mind, it gathers strengths from a broad spread of tributary emotions. Foremost among them is the survival instinct.

Edward O. Wilson

SIBU DAS HELD HIS SIX-MONTH-OLD SON RAHUL close to his chest and gingerly made his way through the throngs of pilgrims that were shoving and shouting their way into the warren of alleys and winding corridors leading to the temple. Most of the crowd was draped in garlands of blood-red hibiscus, Kali's favorite flower. Much of the crowd was beyond frantic, in a state of near-riot. Everybody was hoping for at least a glimpse of their goddess, the one who sits alone in a half-hidden chamber at the epicenter of Kalighat, wearing a necklace of human heads.

It was from this temple that the teeming and fetid city of Calcutta took its name, and from the days when Kalighat was a hidden-away place in the jungle on the banks of the holy Ganges, Calcutta grew to become British India's imperial capital. But the great river changed its course and Kalighat was left to fester on the banks of the scum-covered Tolly's Nullah Canal. There was a dead dog floating in it the first day I visited. The world had moved on.

Sibu Das is 23, and he begs alms for a living. The few rupees he collects in his daily routines he credits to the patronage of Kali, who emerged from the brow of the goddess Durga. Durga arose from the streams of fire the gods sent down from the Himalayas during their final, faint-hope battle with an army of demons that was devouring the whole world. Kali was victorious. A consequence was her broad following, among whom is a thankful Sibu Das.

A slightly more secular reading would attribute Sibu's sparse fortune to two things. The first is that he and his family are among at least 500 beggars the Kalighat priests prepare meals for every afternoon at 4 o'clock. The second is that the mobile-battalion constables with the Calcutta Police are reluctant to roust beggars sleeping at the gates of temples, and Sibu's home is a small patch of pavement outside Kalighat's main gate. At night, he is allowed to sleep on the ground there, undisturbed, with his son

Rahul, and with his wife Kalpana and their three-year-old daughter Sukla.

When I met him, Sibu had been living that way for two years. During that time, roughly 25,000 goats had been ritually slaughtered at Kalighat, hundreds of thousands of people had died in wars in the Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and roughly 18 million people had died from hunger, malnutrition, and other consequences of poverty. During those two years, the world had added to its human population fully twice the number of all the human beings alive on Earth when Kalighat was still a quiet, holy place in the jungle, in the late sixteenth century.

Still, on a good day, Sibu might beg rupees in the equivalent of three dollars. On such lucky days, he is better off than at least one-third of humanity, and he thanks Kali. It is how he survives, and while those of us who are schooled in the traditions of the Enlightenment might sneer at his primitive piety, against the overwhelming evidence of modernity's colossal failure we have no right at all. Not even in the face of the quackery at Kalighat, with its bangle hustlers and trinketwallahs and its priests now making offers over the internet to perform pujas at Kali's feet for you in absentia, at 674 rupees per puja.

We need look no further than Jeremiah, 8:20: The summer is past, the harvest is ended, and we are not saved.

We had our way, and we were not saved. Not by Descartes, or Darwin, or Diderot or Voltaire, or Locke or Hobbes. With entire ecosystems collapsing, the oceans plundered, and global warming causing massive cropland losses, we are living at a time when we will finally learn the answer to the question that has haunted philosophers from time out of mind, the question of whether humanity is capable of determining its own destiny. We should know by about 2050, they say. Certainly not much later.

I spent some time with Sibu on my last day at Kalighat. I'd paid a priest to be my interpreter, but it was difficult.

The Bengal government, with India's federal government, had just unveiled a "sustainable development project" for Kalighat that would mean the razing of several buildings, the construction of an esplanade and an underground parking lot, and various other tidying-up projects. There were plans

for a river cruise for “top end” pilgrims and tourists, and other measures to make visits to Kalighat “hassle-free.” I had no idea what this would mean for Sibü and the other beggars.

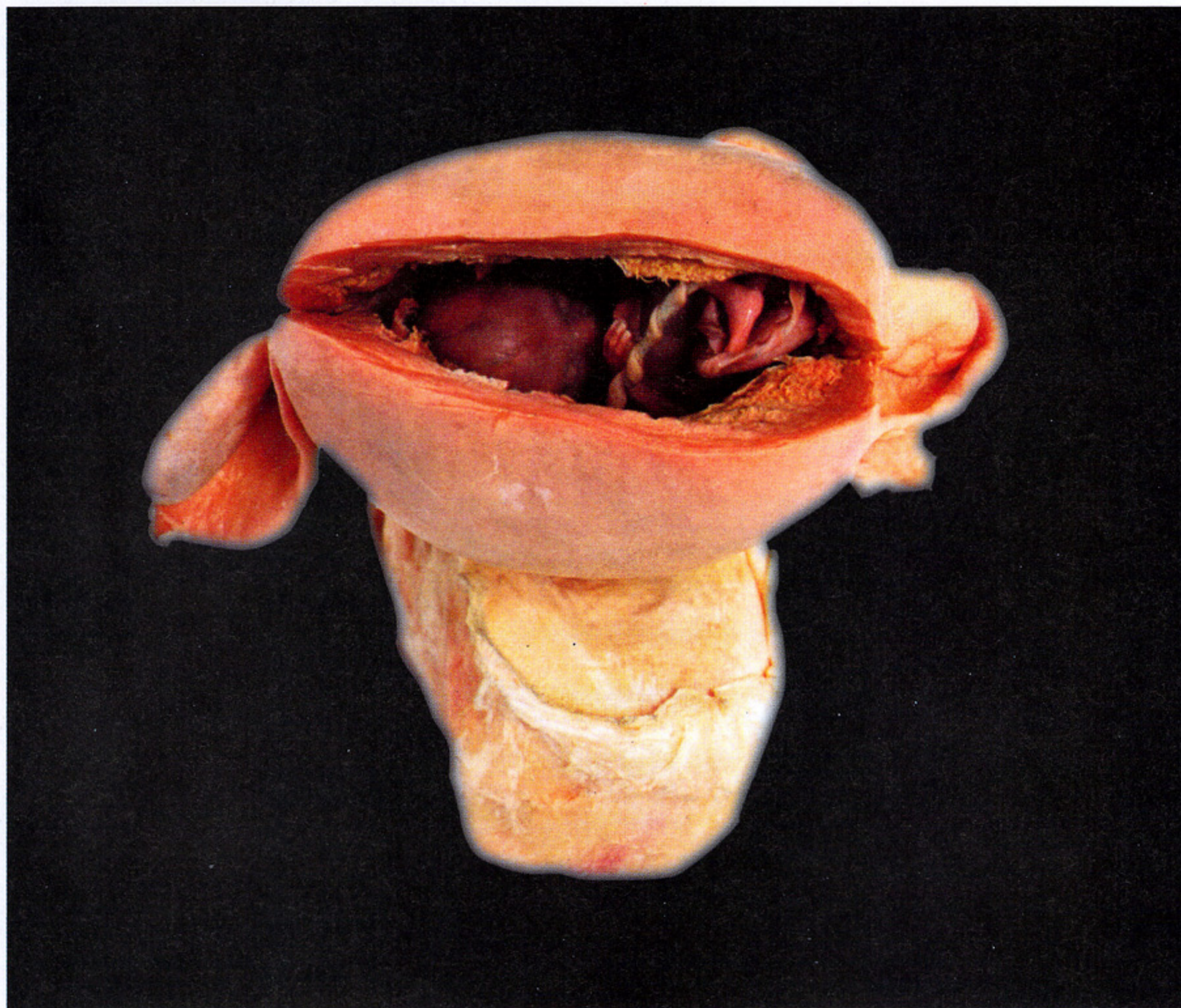
All I could gather was that Sibü had grown up on the other side of Tollygunge, the last station on the old Calcutta tram line, the youngest of five children, and his dad was a plumber who’d lost his job. The family split up, and Sibü never could find decent work, so he ended up sleeping on the ground in the street outside the temple, thanking Kali for her indulgence.

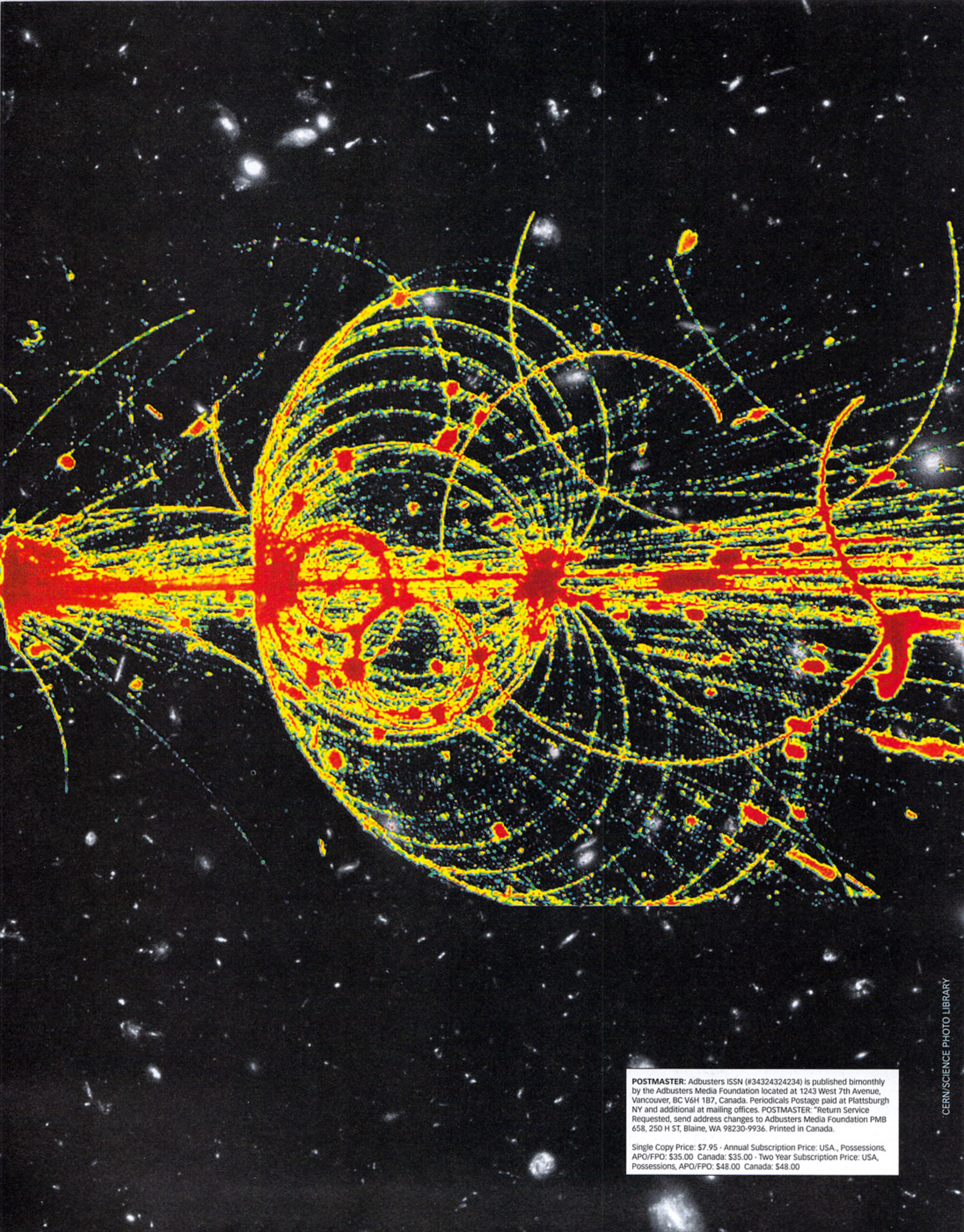
“Do you want to see the god?” the priest kept

asking. No, I said, yet again. I’d seen Kali the day before inside her cage. She’s a primitive thing carved from black basalt. She has a long, gold-plated tongue. She wears a skull necklace and her several arms are festooned with bangles. With one of her many arms, she holds up a human head.

I pushed my last crumpled rupees into Sibü’s hand, wished him well and walked away. Some beggar boys were watching and I was mobbed. Three of them were still clinging to the trunk of my car, ten minutes later on Hijra Road.

Terry Glavin





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We can live forever . . .
infinitely repeating our mistakes.



HALLIBURTON

AMERICA MUST PAY A PRICE FOR ITS IRAQ ADVENTURE

Whether you originally supported or opposed the invasion is now irrelevant. The time has come to forget the old divisions and throw your support behind the emerging democracy in Iraq. This is the argument Bush and Blair are using to get the world on side. But should we forgive an act of war that has killed 100,000 Iraqis, most of them women and children? Should we forget Abu Ghraib and Fallujah? No... at the risk of having this kind of US triumphalism repeated in the future, we cannot forgive, we cannot forget.



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